

MISSION 66: WHERE ARE WE NOW? THE PRESERVATION AND RE-USE OF  
MISSION 66 VISITOR CENTERS

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## ABSTRACT

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Mission 66 was a National Park Service (NPS) program designed to revitalize the national parks and to accommodate an increase in visitors after World War II. The program introduced a new building typology, the visitor center. Over one hundred visitor centers were built for the NPS during Mission 66, all in a modern architectural style. This was a distinct departure from the more rustic designs of earlier decades. Since the time of their construction, these visitor centers have been a source of contention in the parks. The functionality, siting and programming of Mission 66 visitor centers have been questioned in recent years. In addition, the very architectural style of the visitor centers has been challenged as inappropriate. In 2003, the NPS launched a major research initiative to evaluate the origins of the program and to create a basis for evaluation and stewardship of Mission 66 resources. The result was a study of Mission 66 visitor centers, a Mission 66 context study, and an investigation of National Register eligible resources. Since then, many Mission 66 visitor centers continue to be demolished or threatened. This thesis will evaluate the current state of Mission 66 visitor centers. What, if anything, has changed about their interpretation and significance since the initial study? Recognizing the continued increase in visitation, changing standards within the NPS, and visitor expectations as a whole, how can preservationists continue to evaluate the significance of these buildings, and what are appropriate uses for them today?

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## INTRODUCTION

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America's national parks protect our most precious historical and natural resources, and provide recreation, education and enjoyment for millions of Americans every year. Over the past one hundred years, the history of the parks has become part of America's history. Since its formation in 1916, the NPS has evolved continually, defining new values, programs and procedures. After World War II, when the parks experienced increased visitation coupled with decreased funding, the NPS established a comprehensive ten-year development program, Mission 66. Mission 66 was designed to usher the national parks into the new modern era. From this program, the NPS established a new building typology, the visitor center. The Mission 66 visitor center was a centralized facility, housing information, administration, visitor services and interpretation under one roof. These buildings transformed the way national parks functioned. Today, visitor centers continue to play a critical role in the life of a national park. However, many factors effecting visitor centers have changed. The way Americans experience the national parks evolved in the period before Mission 66 began, and it continues to evolve today. Visitor expectations, funding, and national park programing have continued to evolve as well. This puts new requirements on visitor centers that they were not designed to accommodate.

During the Mission 66 program, the NPS built over ninety visitor centers. Today, these buildings are aging resources within the national parks. Given the significance of Mission 66 in the history of the NPS and in board trends of American history overall, visitor centers are valuable historical resources worthy of protection themselves. In recent years, Mission 66 has come under attack for a variety of reasons. The development standards for Mission 66 visitor centers, as well as their Modern style, are often seen as inappropriate or obsolete. Many Mission 66 visitor centers are regarded with disdain and threatened with demolition.

In 2003, the NPS launched a research initiative to explore the significance of Mission 66 and its visitor centers. As a result of this study, several visitor centers were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and standards for determining the significance of individual Mission 66 visitor centers were established. Ten years after the completion of this study, it is once again time to re-evaluate the role that Mission 66 visitor centers play in the

national park system. Many iconic Mission 66 visitor centers have been demolished since the conclusion of the NPS study, indicating that Mission 66 resources continue to be undervalued in the park system, and that Mission 66 visitor centers are unable to provide adequate services in today's national parks. Changing circumstances within the NPS as a whole requires a renewed understanding of the factors and values that led to the development and design of Mission 66 visitor centers. In addition, the current factors that influence the continued use, renovation, or demolition of visitor centers need to be explored. Changes in visitor expectations, programing needs, and funding affect not only Mission 66 visitor centers, but all NPS facilities.

If Mission 66 visitor centers are unable to adapt to current NPS standards, they will become obsolete. However, Mission 66 continues to be an important period in NPS history and in the formation of the modern national park. Significant features of existing Mission 66 visitor centers need to be reconciled with the changing programmatic needs of the NPS in order to preserve Mission 66 visitor centers for years to come.

## CHAPTER 1 - Mission 66 Program History

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The National Park Service Organic Act, signed by Woodrow Wilson in 1916, established the NPS as we know it today. The Act states that national parks were created to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects” for “the enjoyment of future generations.”<sup>1</sup> After the establishment of Yellowstone in 1872, the United States Government began to create national parks, but had no agency within the Department of the Interior to manage them. For forty-four years, the national parks were “a federal Cinderella- beautiful, but not very well looked after.”<sup>2</sup> When Woodrow Wilson signed the Organic Act in 1916, it placed all of these parks under the purview of one federal agency, the NPS. At its creation, the NPS became responsible for thirty-five national parks and monuments.<sup>3</sup>

Additional federal lands, including many Civil War battlefields, remained under the administration of the War Department and the Forest Service until Franklin D. Roosevelt transferred fifty-six military sites and national monuments to the NPS in 1933. This act coincided with New Deal policies benefiting the national parks. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) flooded the NPS with funds and personnel meant to enhance the national parks but also stimulate the economy and provide jobs for the unemployed. This was the first of two development periods for the NPS, but the onset of World War II halted growth.<sup>4</sup> In 1942, the CCC, WPA and other New Deal programs were suspended. National park visitation decreased as the country focused on fighting a World War.

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<sup>1</sup> Larry M. Dilsaver, ed., “An Act to Establish A National Park Service” in *America’s National Park System, The Critical Documents*, (New York City: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994), [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/anps/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/anps/index.htm). Accessed on March 20, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> “Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use,” unpublished report, January 1956, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center.

<sup>3</sup> “History” United States Department of the Interior, NPS, <http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/history.htm>. Accessed on January 21, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Harlan D. Unrau and Williss, Frank G., *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930’s* September 1983, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center. [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/unrau-williss/adhi.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi.htm). Accessed on February 17, 2013.

When the war ended, New Deal policies were not resumed, and decreased wartime funding for the NPS became the norm. The NPS had a difficult time maintaining roads, trails and facilities within the parks.<sup>5</sup> This period of low funding overlapped with ten years of increased visitation.<sup>6</sup> In 1940, seventeen million people visited national parks all over the country, and annual funding for the NPS was \$21 million. Fifteen years later, funding for the NPS had not increased significantly, but visitation annually had almost tripled, to over fifty-six million visitors in 1955.<sup>7</sup> In 1955, United States population was over one hundred and fifty-six million, meaning that at least a third of Americans visited a national park that year. The parks were “being strangled to death by their own popularity.”<sup>8</sup>

Through the first half of the twentieth century, most visitors arrived by train, and explored the national parks on foot or through concessioner-operated transportation. After World War II, most visitors to national parks arrived in personal cars. The rise of personal car ownership was closely linked to the expansion of leisure time and the concept of family summer vacations centered around the new federal highway system. This trend contributed to the rise in park visitation after World War II. The parks, which had not seen significant improvements since New Deal programs lapsed, were ill equipped to handle the number of automobiles and visitors arriving annually, particularly in the summer months. Congestion, traffic jams, long lines at park facilities, and overflowing parking lots plagued parks all over the country.<sup>9</sup>

Newton Drury, director of the NPS from 1940 to 1951, called the parks “victims of war” but felt there was little he could do without increased funding.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the poor

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<sup>5</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007): 4.

<sup>6</sup> Visitation in the national parks was at a record high from 1947 through the Mission 66 era. See Associated Press, “National Park Visitors May Total 26 Million,” *The Washington Post*, August 23, 1947. Isabelle F. Story, “Parking in National Parks Calls for Early Reservations” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 21, 1948, “National Park Areas Await Vast Influx” *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 1950, “National Park Crowds Reach a Record High” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 10, 1950, and Frank Cipriani, “National Park Service Areas Draw Record Crowds” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 6, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> Conrad Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980): 261.

<sup>8</sup> John B. Oakes, “Conservation: U.S. National Parks” *New York Times*, December 13, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, NPS, 2000): 1.

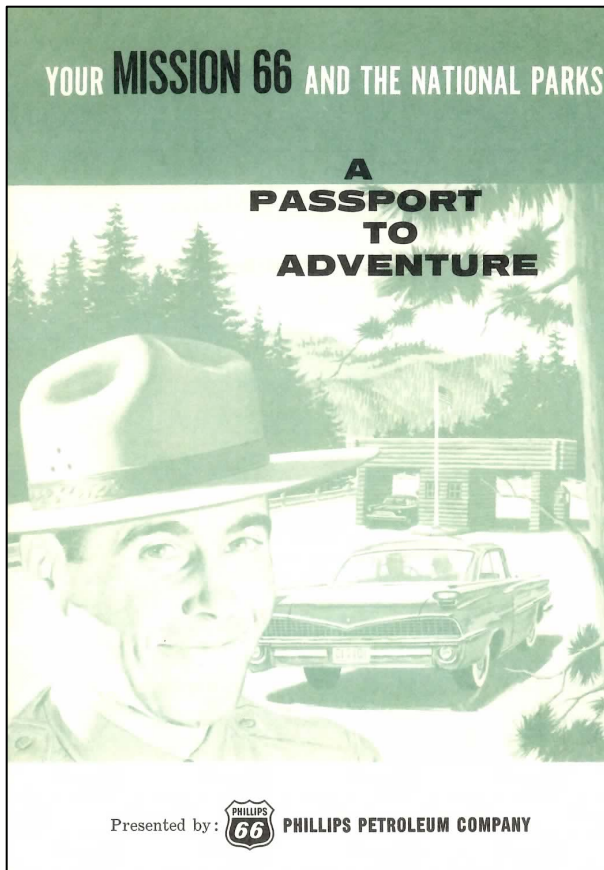
conditions of the national parks attracted media attention. In 1953, Bernard DeVoto, writing for *Harpers Magazine*, suggested closing the national parks if Congress could not provide adequate funding to manage them. DeVoto wrote that “the Service is suffering from financial anemia” and “it is the impoverished stepchild of Congress.” He cited slum-like campgrounds, overcrowding, too few Park Rangers, and dangerous conditions in parks throughout the country. While DeVoto praised the NPS for “miraculous” use of the funds available, he believed that it would take too much funding to restore the parks to pre-World War II conditions, and an impossible amount to prepare them for current demands. He went so far as to claim “so much of the priceless heritage which the Service must safeguard for the United States is going to hell.” DeVoto’s solution was to reduce the size of the national park system, closing up all parks until they could be properly cared for. He wrote that the NPS was “unable to do the job in full and so it had better not be attempted at all.”<sup>11</sup>

Conrad Wirth, the successor of Drury, knew that something drastic was needed to save the national parks physically and in the minds of the American people. In order to provide the public with the opportunity to enjoy the national parks, Wirth believed that a drastic increase in funding and facilities was needed. In the past, national park budgets were inadequate and changed from year to year, making it difficult to plan and accomplish large projects. Wirth proposed that a full ten years of increased funding would allow larger projects to be completed. Wirth developed a groundbreaking ten-year program, later christened Mission 66, to modernize the national park system. Through increased funding, staffing, and development, Wirth hoped Mission 66 would “overcome the inroads of neglect and to restore to the

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<sup>11</sup> Bernard DeVoto, “Lets Close the National Parks,” *Harpers Magazine*, October 1953, 49-52. The poor condition of the national parks covered extensively by the media in the years preceding Mission 66. In 1954, *The Washington Post* reported that visitor facilities continued to be “inadequate” and a “huge backlog” of work was needed for the national parks to accommodate the increasing number of visitors. The article stated that the national parks should charge higher entrance fees to pay directly for park upkeep. Other articles suggested placing quotas on park attendance, limiting the number of visitors allowed in a park each year. See “Paying for Parks” *The Washington Post*, June 13, 1954, B4 and Isabelle F. Story, “Travelers Still Find Pleasure in Yellowstone,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 13, 1947, 10.

American people a national park system adequate for their needs.”<sup>12</sup> In addition, a ten-year program would coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NPS in 1966.<sup>13</sup>



1.1 *Your Mission 66 and the National Parks, A Passport to Adventure*

At the time, other federal agencies were also proposing multi-year programs to accomplish large projects. A month before Wirth envisioned Mission 66, Lucias Clay presented the report “A Ten-Year Highway Program” to Congress. This report resulted directly in the Federal Highway Act of 1956. The Federal Highway Act would influence the national parks directly by increasing automobile access and travel. Throughout its formation, Mission 66 was closely tied to the development of the federal highway system, the idea of personal car ownership, and America’s new dependence on gasoline. Wirth cultivated relationships with the American Automobile Association (AAA), and other automobile and travel organizations.

Phillips Petroleum Company, Standard Oil, the

AAA, and other private business interests would support Mission 66 publications and events throughout the program’s duration.<sup>14</sup>

Wirth justified the Mission 66 program through the original 1916 national park legislation, which clearly states that the national parks were to be enjoyed by all current and future citizens of the United States. The way that Americans experienced the national parks was changing with the advent of personal car ownership, but the fundamental goals of the NPS continued to be the same. Mission 66 would allow the NPS to adapt to new requirements while

<sup>12</sup> Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People*, 238.

<sup>13</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 65-66.

<sup>14</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 118-199.

continuing to conserve natural and historic resources for the enjoyment of the public.

Throughout Mission 66, Wirth reminded the NPS employees and the public that the national parks were created for the enjoyment of the people, and not for conservation alone.

Development would be necessary for continued public use, especially as more Americans viewed the national parks from behind the wheel of a car. Wirth wrote in 1958, "remember that we too are preserving more than a landscape. It is just as important to preserve the opportunity to enjoy."<sup>15</sup> This would become a foundational justification for Mission 66 development. Conservation, without public enjoyment, was not fulfilling the NPS mission. Wirth believed that for the NPS to evolve along with the rest of the nation, additional development, in the form of modern facilities, was necessary.

### **Mission 66 Policies**

Eight fundamental points, outlined in the official Mission 66 report generated by the NPS, guided the Mission 66 program. These points are as follows:

1. Provide services and accommodations for "modern recreational needs" to be achieved through "greater participation of private enterprise."
2. "Provide government operated facilities needed to serve the public, to protect the park resources, and to maintain the physical plant."
3. Make the parks "more usable, more enjoyable, and more meaningful" and "improve protection of the parks through visitor cooperation."
4. Increase operating funds and field staff.
5. Provide adequate employee housing.
6. Obtain additional lands and water rights necessary to protect the parks.
7. Create a national recreation plan to "produce a system of recreational developments by each level of government."
8. Protect and preserve wilderness areas and encourage their appreciation and enjoyment.<sup>16</sup>

These points are the foundational policies of Mission 66. "Modern recreational needs" refers to the evolution in the way Americans experienced the national parks and leisure time in

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<sup>15</sup> Conrad Wirth, "Mission 66 in the Headlines" *National Parks Magazine*, January-March 1958, 36.

<sup>16</sup> "Mission 66 Progress Report" unpublished report, March 1966, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, 3.

general. Before World War II, the national parks were visited primarily by upper class urbanites seeking a wilderness experience. These visitors travelled to the national parks by train or other public transportation, and often stayed in a single national park for up to a month at one time. After World War II, leisure time and recreation became part of the national identity. National park visitors extended to include the middle class. Personal car ownership allowed more Americans to visit the national parks on their own, and for shorter periods of time. These points outline the foundational belief that development and construction of additional facilities were necessary to cater to the new levels of visitation while still conserving resources.

Fourteen guidelines were to assist park officials in achieving these program goals. These guidelines stressed that park resources should be protected. The best way to protect park resources, according to the guidelines, was to provide adequate visitor facilities “for public use and appreciation of an area, and for prevention of over-use.” Through appropriate visitor facilities, parks could provide interpretive programs and information to “help the park visitor enjoy the area, and to appreciate and understand it, which leads directly to improved protection through visitor cooperation in caring for park resources.” The guidelines stipulated that development of park facilities should not “encroach on important park features,” and that wilderness areas remain undeveloped.<sup>17</sup>

New development within the parks was a conscious effort to control the flow of visitors and compensate for increased visitation to the parks. Mission 66 was, above all else, a program to protect park resources while still providing an enjoyable experience for large numbers of visitors. New roads, trails, infrastructure, administration buildings and comfort stations were needed, as well as more and better-trained park staff.

While these policies were well established and accepted at first, the second half of Mission 66 played out in a different political and cultural atmosphere, which led to the eventual under appreciation of the program. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations replaced Eisenhower in the White House, and conservation initiatives became much more prevalent. Culturally, the environmental movement was beginning to rise in popularity,

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<sup>17</sup> “Mission 66 Progress Report,” 5.



particularly after Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was published in 1962. Two years later, in 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act, which protected the backcountry of many national parks, as well as other undisturbed areas, from future development. Unlike Mission 66, this was not done for "the enjoyment of future generations"<sup>18</sup> and national recreation needs, but solely for environmental reasons. These programs actually rejected the idea of visitor experience and recreation within the parks. Rather, conservation alone was seen as the primary goal. This contributed to the backlash against the Mission 66 program and its buildings. As priorities shifted, both internally and in public perception, Mission 66 came to be seen primarily as a development program that threatened natural resources. However, at its founding, Mission 66 was meant to be a program which reconciled conservation needs with changes in American leisure time and recreational practices.

In 1958, Congress formed the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Committee (ORRRC) to investigate the nation's recreational needs and resources. This brought attention to the change in American tourism and recreation brought on by the advent of leisure time and personal car ownership.<sup>19</sup> Later, in 1964, Congress established the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to create grants for federal agencies to acquire and develop new parks and recreation areas. This fund was not part of the NPS, but open to all federal agencies to create national, state, or local parks. Unlike Mission 66, the fund was supported primarily through park user fees. This idea went directly against Wirth's philosophy that parks be free for all Americans, and symbolized the beginnings of a changing philosophy about parks and public funding, which continues to evolve today.

Wirth stepped down as director of the NPS in 1964. Although Mission 66 did not officially end until 1966, it was rarely mentioned after Wirth retired. The "Road to the Future," a long-range plan for the NPS, replaced Mission 66 as the NPS's guiding program. The "Road to the Future" incorporated conservation policies and re-envisioned the policies of Mission 66 to align with new environmentalist and conservation goals.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Mission 66, "Road to the

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<sup>18</sup> Dilsaver, "An Act to Establish A National Park Service."

<sup>19</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 291-293.

<sup>20</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 316.

Future” did not address specific construction and park development goals. There has not been another comprehensive development program since Mission 66 officially ended. Today, the New Deal Era and Mission 66 remain the two major campaigns of development and change within the NPS.

In 1976, Howard Stagner, himself an original member of the Mission 66 working committee, looked back on the accomplishments of Mission 66. He wrote that Mission 66 “vastly improved park facilities” and created a “stronger, better equipped organization.”<sup>21</sup> Mission 66 certainly left a mark on the NPS. It was the last major redevelopment program for the agency, and it permanently increased funding for the national parks. In addition, Mission 66 made the parks accessible for an increased numbers of visitors at a time when recreation and leisure time were being established as part of the American character. With Mission 66, the NPS was able to save the national parks from underfunding and overuse. The policies put in place during Mission 66 laid the groundwork for the way the NPS and individual national parks run in this environment today.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary national parks are again facing increased visitation and lack of funding, coinciding with another shift in American’s definition of recreation and national park experiences. This makes a review of the policies and guidelines set forth during Mission 66 even more important for the future of America’s public park system.

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<sup>21</sup> Stagner, *Mission 66 Revisited*, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 339-340.

## CHAPTER 2 - The Mission 66 Visitor Center

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Mission 66 program initiatives encompassed all areas of the NPS. Projects included new infrastructure, improved programming, increased personnel and better employee training. However, the most visible and pioneering project during the program was the construction of over ninety new visitor centers.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to Mission 66, visitor services were located in several different buildings within a park. Buildings were clustered into “villages”, and each building was dedicated to one specific function. Villages included park museums, lodges, rest areas, concessions, park administration and other critical park services. As parks grew and more services were required, buildings were added to the village. This type of development meant that many different



2.1 The Longmire Community Building, part of the Longmire Village in Mount Rainier National Park. This building is an example the “village” concept that Mission 66 visitor centers replaced.

buildings needed to be maintained, and it did not cater to the new, automobile-centric way Americans experienced the national parks after World War II. The visitor center was a new building typology based on a more complex trend of development all across the country after World War II. “Modernization of the American landscape” occurred through the construction of highways, strip malls, and residential developments.<sup>24</sup> With the new dependence on private automobiles, the way Americans shopped, lived and travelled was changing. Much like the new suburban shopping center, industrial complexes or corporate campuses, visitor centers centralized development at one point and provide a wide range of services in one location. Visitors could park their car and access all park services and information in one building.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and The National Park Dilemma*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007):10.

<sup>24</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 47.

<sup>25</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000): 24.

Thomas Vint, a landscape architect and key Mission 66 administrator, described the visitor center as the “city hall” of a park.<sup>26</sup> Centralized services and programming fundamentally changed how the parks operated, and allowed the NPS to address increased visitation in a revolutionary way.

Early visitor center prototypes emerged before Mission 66 began. The NPS struggled with how to define this new building typology, calling these buildings “administrative-museums” “public service” or “public use” facilities.<sup>27</sup> These early designs set the precedent for later Mission 66 visitor centers. The Custer Battlefield museum and administration building, built in 1950, illustrates the transition from “village” development to centralized facilities. The building included a museum and office space under the same roof;<sup>28</sup> however, it lacked several important Mission 66 features, including visitor orientation through large open spaces and specific circulation plans. The lobby was small and the museum included no auditorium or audio-visual exhibits, which would become increasingly important during the Mission 66 era. Three years later, in 1953, Cecil Doty, a prominent NPS landscape architect, designed a public-use building for Carlsbad Caverns. The idea of centralized facilities matured with this design, and the building set a precedent for Mission 66 visitor centers to come.<sup>29</sup> The building at Carlsbad Caverns was modern, with a steel and glass façade. It included a central lobby for visitor orientation, park offices, and exhibit space.<sup>30</sup>

The NPS explained the purpose of the visitor center in the official Mission 66 report. The visitor center was meant to direct a visitor’s experience by allowing “the visitor to see the park and enjoy to the fullest extent possible what it has to offer.” As a main point for information about park resources as well as visitor services, the visitor center was both

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<sup>26</sup> “Visitor Center Planning: Notes on Discussions Held in EODC November 18-22 1957 and WODC February 4-6, 1958” unpublished report, n.d., United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, in Carr, *Mission 66*, 144.

<sup>27</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 142.

<sup>28</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Jeannie Kim, “Mission 66” in *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture, from Cockpit to Playboy*. Beatriz Colomina, ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/columbia/docDetail.action?docID=10482146>. Accessed March 17, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 19.

“informational, and in some degree, interpretive.” The visitor center could also include “park headquarter offices, or a ranger station, or a museum, or other facilities.” By “getting the visitor off to a good start” the NPS could control where visitors went, what they saw, and what information was deemed important about the park.<sup>31</sup> The report claimed that many parks lacked centralized buildings to provide visitors with information and services, and as a result, many visitors would “drive almost aimlessly about the parks without adequate benefit and enjoyment from their trips.”<sup>32</sup> To address this problem, most Mission 66 plans for individual parks included a new visitor center.

Providing visitors with essential services and information was not the only benefit of visitor centers. Visitor centers also allowed park officials to control “visitor flow” through the park by directing circulation patterns and highlighting certain areas of the park over others. This created a very specific visitor experience. In this way, visitor centers attempted to balance increased use with the need for conservation within the parks. Consolidating visitor services in one building allowed the NPS to cater to a large number of visitors with less development overall. This was a more efficient use of park funds, and protected natural resources as well.

### **Visitor Center Siting and Development**

An appropriate location for a visitor center within a national park was critical for responsible development and to effectively direct visitor experiences. In the years prior to Mission 66, Thomas Vint outlined two courses of action for development locations within the national parks. He produced a memorandum to Newton Drury in 1945, about “development problems” at Yosemite. Vint urged Drury to locate all new development outside of the sensitive Yosemite Valley. Vint outlined “Plan A” as development near sensitive areas and resources, while “Plan B” would locate development far from resources, outside of park boundaries. Vint hoped that Drury would follow Plan B, and subsequently set a precedent for all future park development. However, Drury chose to build within the Yosemite Valley,

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<sup>31</sup> “Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use,” unpublished report, January 1956, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, 92-93.

<sup>32</sup> “Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use,” 29.

following Plan A. These “increasingly destructive compromises” influenced the location of Mission 66 development 20 years later.<sup>33</sup>

Mission 66 policy stressed that development, especially buildings not open to the public, such as employee housing and utility buildings, should be placed as far from important resources as possible. Official Mission 66 policy was that development should be located “on lands of secondary importance.”<sup>34</sup> However, visitor centers also needed to be located at the best site for interpretation and instruction. This created a distinct rift between Mission 66 development policy and the actual sites chosen for visitor centers. NPS educators knew that for the best experience, interpretation strategies needed to take advantage of the actual resource. Because of this, visitor centers were sited “to overlook significant park resources while not competing unduly with the resources for visitor attention or intruding visually upon them.”<sup>35</sup> Visitor centers were designed to take full advantage of the actual resource within the park, but not to take the place of them. Park officials still wanted visitors to experience the resource first hand. The decision to locate a visitor center adjacent to these important resources demonstrates that Mission 66 planners valued visitor education and experience just as much as conservation.<sup>36</sup>

In order to prevent traffic jams and random patterns of park use, roads and visitor centers also needed to influence the way automobiles traversed the parks. Mission 66 planners debated the best location for visitor centers. John D. Cabot, a supervising architect in the NPS, divided the siting of visitor centers into three distinct categories. In some parks, visitor centers functioned best at the park entrance. These visitor centers “established the mood of the park” for the visitor, and provided the necessary information before sending the visitor out into the park. An “en-route” visitor center was located on the way to popular resources or park locations. En-route visitor centers also provided the visitor with information, but included some interpretation as well. Finally, terminal visitor centers were located at popular destinations

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<sup>33</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 75.

<sup>34</sup> “Mission 66 Progress Report,” 21.

<sup>35</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh2/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh2/index.htm). Accessed January 20, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 194.

within the park. This type of visitor center was most common during Mission 66. Terminal visitor centers were meant to provide visitor services and interpret the adjacent resource.<sup>37</sup> They could also control a visitor's circulation path through the park, and prevent overcrowding at particularly popular areas.<sup>38</sup>

In the end, the location of Mission 66 visitor centers was determined by the main function of the park. Scenic parks, with very little interpretive needs, but high numbers of seasonal, automobile-dependent visitors, benefited from park entrance centers or "en-route" visitor centers. Often, these parks had multiple entrances that required several different locations for information distribution. Meanwhile, historic or cultural parks, such as battlefields, called for terminal visitor centers. At these sites, the purpose of the visitor's trip was to gain an understanding of a historic event, person, or culture. Robert Utley, the NPS's chief historian, wrote in 1964 that in these cases, visitor centers should be placed "right on top of the resource" so that visitors could "see virtually everything" from the visitor center.<sup>39</sup> To Utley and Mission 66 planners, adequate interpretation for the public justified placing visitor centers near precious resources. In historical parks particularly, interpretation was given precedence over "integrity of the setting."<sup>40</sup> By understanding and appreciating the resource, Mission 66 planners believed that the public would be more inclined to respect and preserve the national parks.<sup>41</sup> This idea influenced Mission 66 development policy throughout Mission 66.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Recently, the location of Mission 66 visitor centers within national parks has been criticized as irresponsible and destructive. The visitor centers at Gettysburg National Military Park, Pipestone National Monument, and Dinosaur National Monument have all been attacked for being too close to the resource they interpret. Ethan Carr, noted Mission 66 historian, writes "Mission 66 came to symbolize...a willingness to sacrifice the integrity of park ecosystems for the sake of enhancing the merely superficial appreciation of scenery by crowds of people in automobiles." It is often assumed that this was done out of deliberate negligence or ignorance. However, Mission 66 literature and policy at the time explored this issue in-depth. Wirth wrote in 1955, as Mission 66 was being developed, that the NPS was in dire need of a "guiding policy" for preventing development in sensitive areas. His memorandum instructed, "there must be a definite policy, to be carried out over a period of years but initiated promptly of getting out of the precious areas in the parks and on to the lesser areas." While many different guidelines were developed, a central policy was never established. Often, the development that actually took place contradicted professed NPS values. Tension between policy and practice continues today. See Carr, *Mission 66*, 14 and Conrad Wirth, "Memorandum No. 2" March 17, 1955, Mission 66 Program History, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, Box A8213.

<sup>39</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 195.

<sup>40</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 195.

<sup>41</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 27.

## Visitor Center Style and Architectural Design



2.2 The Old Faithful Inn (1903) at Yellowstone National Park is an example of rustic architecture in the national parks. Located near Old Faithful, the inn is one of the few log hotels in the United States.

Like the location and number of visitor centers built, the architectural style and larger scale of Mission 66 visitor centers was groundbreaking. Prior to Mission 66, architecture within the national parks had been traditional and rustic. This architectural style emphasized natural materials, and was influenced by the scenic surroundings. Crucial to the picturesque or romantic style,

rustic architecture was used to evoke a certain feeling or complete a picture. Rather than disappearing into the landscape, rustic architecture was meant to be a part of the landscape composition. Nature was primarily seen as scenery, and rustic architecture completed the scene. A pseudo-Swiss chalet might be constructed in the mountains, while an adaptation of Native American pueblos would be designed in the Southwest. This style exploded in the national parks during the 1920s with the creation of the CCC. The CCC provided both skilled and unskilled labor needed for the “painstaking” and detailed construction of these buildings.<sup>43</sup> However, as funding in the parks decreased and maintenance was deferred, the

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<sup>42</sup> Even though the NPS justified the changes to traditional development philosophy, the public reaction was not always favorable. Even during the program, negative press about overdevelopment threatened the success of Mission 66. Critics of Mission 66 were often wilderness advocates and conservation groups who were concerned that the parks were being “loved to death.” These groups were concerned about the location, size, and number of new Mission 66 buildings. They also attacked the way some national parks were used. Recreational use was common within the national parks during Mission 66, and has risen in popularity to the present day. Many conservationists felt that recreational activities are destructive to natural resources. Ernest Swift, executive director of the National Wildlife Federation, accused Mission 66 of overdeveloping parks and allowing too many people to visit them. Swift called tourists a “sub-species of homo sapiens” who were ruining the national parks at the expense of future generations. See Carr, *Mission 66*, 61 and Ernest Swift, “Parks- or Resorts?” *National Parks Magazine* 31, no 131 (October, 1947): 148.

<sup>43</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 11.





2.3 The Bandelier CCC Historic District at Bandelier National Monument. The Bandelier CCC Historic District contains 31 buildings built by the CCC in the rustic style. In this case, the buildings were meant to imitate historic southwest pueblo dwellings.

rustic style became associated with outdated and inadequate park facilities.<sup>44</sup> Mission 66 visitor centers distinguished

themselves from the rustic style by embracing more efficient modern architectural styles. This was meant to set the new buildings apart from the old image of the NPS. In addition, Mission 66 visitor centers were often larger than the rustic buildings of the previous decades. When visitor services, park headquarters, and interpretation was combined into one building, instead of the “village” system, the buildings consequently grew in size. Sleek, understated modern architectural styles were meant to harmonize these larger buildings with the surrounding landscape.

Modern designs began appearing in the national parks almost fifteen years before Mission 66 began. Ethan Carr identifies Eldridge T. Spencer’s designs as the first Modernist buildings in the national parks. Spencer’s design for a Yosemite service station in 1941 and employee residences in 1942 had distinctly modern characteristics. These designs reflected the overall architectural trends in the United States at the time, and the need for efficient construction techniques during wartime. Early modern architecture in the parks was rare, however, because of the lack of construction projects post-World War II. It was not until 1955, with the opening of the Jackson Lodge at Grand Teton National Park, that the public got their first glimpse of modern architecture in the national parks. The Jackson Lodge, designed by Gilbert Stanley Underwood, was constructed prior to the establishment of the Mission 66 program. However, the modern design of the lodge, with a flat roof, no ornamentation, large

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<sup>44</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 22.

glass windows, and extensive use of modern, efficient building materials exemplifies the design concepts that Mission 66 visitor centers would later emulate.<sup>45</sup>



2.4 Jackson Lake Lodge at Grand Teton National Park.

With modern architecture, Mission 66 visitor centers symbolized progress, innovation and the reinvention of the NPS. But the choice to use modern designs and modern mass-produced materials was also one of necessity. With the disappearance of the CCC, the NPS could no longer afford to pay for the labor-intensive construction of rustic-style buildings. Modern architecture and modern construction materials were “simply a more efficient way of producing buildings.”<sup>46</sup> Cecil Doty explained the shift to modern architecture as inevitable. He wrote that in order to “anticipate the requirements of modern transportation and to exercise the potential of new construction technology,” modern architectural styles were necessary.<sup>47</sup>

Although Doty designed a large number of Mission 66 buildings, he had also designed rustic buildings during the CCC construction period. His pre-Mission 66 designs were already moving in a Modernist direction. Despite the advantages, economic and otherwise, for adopting modern designs, Doty and other NPS planners were most likely just following the trend of their profession. Modern architecture was pervasive throughout the United States by the time Wirth introduced Mission 66. Modern designs were the “ubiquitous stylistic choice of corporations, government agencies, cultural institutions, housing developers, and retailers.”<sup>48</sup> For the NPS, which desperately needed to reinvent its image and regain the appreciation of the nation, modern designs were a logical choice and in keeping with contemporary trends.

<sup>45</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 129.

<sup>46</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 137.

<sup>47</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 137.

Mission 66 caused an immediate increase in design work for NPS architects. A reorganization of the NPS administrative structure in 1953 created two main offices in charge of NPS development. The Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) and the Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) oversaw and executed the design and construction of all NPS buildings. Often, to accommodate for the increased demand for design services, the EODC and WODC contracted with outside architects. However, the EODC and WODC continued to generate all preliminary designs, including programming and most schematic designs.<sup>49</sup> Even when internationally known architects were involved in a project, the EODC or WODC would have an important role in the design development. For example, when internationally renowned architect, Richard Neutra, designed the Cyclorama Center at Gettysburg National Military Park, NPS designers had already completed a “master plan for development,” which included the Cyclorama footprint, building orientation, and overall site plan.<sup>50</sup>

As Wirth instructed, the most successful Mission 66 visitor centers were modest and forgettable. Unlike rustic buildings, Mission 66 buildings were designed to be invisible. Ethan Carr, author of *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, writes, “they were not meant to have a powerful presence themselves, but to recede visually.”<sup>51</sup> No ornamentation and simple facades helped large visitor centers remain undetected in the larger landscape composition. Low massing and neutral colors blended into the setting more easily than elaborate or highly ornamented designs. In this way, modern designs were still meant to harmonize with the setting.<sup>52</sup> If Mission 66 visitor centers functioned best as modest buildings, why the NPS decided to hire internationally and nationally known architects remains to be seen. Again, the desire for modest buildings, contrasted with the patronage of renowned architects, reflects a disconnect between Mission 66 policy and actual practice. At the very least, this idea exemplifies the difficulties with overarching policies for the NPS. Reconciling the

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<sup>49</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 105.

<sup>51</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 151.

<sup>52</sup> Ethan Carr, “Mission 66 and ‘Rustication’,” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 16-19, No. 9 1999,

individual needs of vastly different parks with national, comprehensive program policies are often impossible. During Mission 66, many parks were able to easily utilize national policies. However, others required iconic or architecturally significant visitor centers to make a statement. For example, at Gettysburg, park administrators chose to build a visitor center that would act as a memorial on the battlefield, rather than a building that disappeared into the landscape.

### Character-Defining Features Of Mission 66 Visitor Centers



2.5 The Mission 66 visitor center at Sunset Crater National Monument.

Identifying the unique characteristics that make Mission 66 visitor centers significant is imperative for appropriate and accurate preservation in the future. Previously, character-defining features have focused primarily on tangible, architectural elements. While these elements are an important component

of Mission 66 visitor centers, other character-defining features, including the concept of centralization and the creation of a unique visitor experience, need to be considered as well.

Within the EODC and the WODC, a building typology was quickly developed that



2.6 The Painted Desert Visitor Center at Petrified Forest National Park utilizes the typical elements of Mission 66 designs, including low, horizontal massing, flat roofs, and a simple façade.

utilized the functional advantages of modern designs but also incorporated the needs and aesthetic of traditional NPS buildings. This typology is characterized by modern

architectural buildings with low, horizontal massing, usually not over two stories, flat roofs, no ornamentation, simple facades, and extensive fenestration.<sup>53</sup> Like the rustic-style buildings before them, Mission 66 visitor centers attempted to blend into the landscape. By utilizing the sparse exteriors and understated designs of modern architecture, larger buildings could be built without interfering with the surrounding landscape. Visitor centers were often built into the side of a slope, so that from the front, only a single story with a public entrance was visible. The buildings also took advantage of advances in building materials and technology. Like other modern buildings, Mission 66 visitor centers relied heavily on efficient and modern materials like concrete, steel and glass. This was a drastic departure from rustic designs that used natural materials native to the area. The use of modern architectural design and efficient, modern construction materials are core character-defining feature for all Mission 66 visitor centers.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, Mission 66 visitor centers took advantage of the free plans, open spaces, and the flowing circulation patterns typical in modern designs. Open floor plans allowed designers to “create spaces in which larger numbers of visitors could circulate easily” and were essential to the success of visitor center design. This allowed visitors to easily locate services, and an emphasis on circulation allowed NPS architects to control the flow of visitors through the building, and subsequently, the park itself.<sup>55</sup>

Influential NPS designers, such as Cecil Doty, John D. Cabot, and Lyle E. Bennett, emphasized the importance of circulation and open plans. They also relied heavily on views of

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<sup>53</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 23.

<sup>54</sup> Though it is identified as a foundational tenant of Mission 66, modern design was never officially adopted as matter of policy. Wirth said about Mission 66 design that “Structures should be designed to reflect the character of the area while at the same time following up-to-date design standards. Park structures are to conform, to some extent, with the trend toward contemporary design and the use of materials and equipment accepted as standard by the building industry. However, restraint must be exercised in the design so that the structures will not be out of character with the area and that the structures will be subordinated to their surroundings.” See Conrad L. Wirth, “Design of Structures,” memorandum, February 13, 1956, box 6, Conrad L. Wirth Collection, University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center, as quoted in Carr, *Mission 66*, 141. Later, Wirth again attempted to clarify his stance on modern architecture. At a Project Supervisor’s conference in 1957, Wirth directed NPS architects to design buildings that “fit the terrain” and were “inconspicuous.” He stressed that buildings should be durable, and conservative, including only what is needed by the park at the time. He instructed the architects: “don’t try to lead your profession in fancy design.” See Elbert Cox, quoting Wirth’s comments at the Project Supervisors’ Conference at the WODC, San Francisco, January 9, 1957, Mission 66 Program History, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, Box A8213.

<sup>55</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 22.



the surrounding environment to inform and entice the visitor. Architects were encouraged to incorporate views of the resource in their designs. Mission 66 planners felt that “a visitor center should be in touch with the features it interprets.”<sup>56</sup> The visitor center was meant to be the first place a visitor encountered a park resource, and the information a visitor received would encourage them to go further into the park and experience the resource firsthand. The integration of indoor and outdoor spaces was encouraged. Richard Neutra called this integration the “inter penetration of space,” which attempted to draw the outdoors in to the building.<sup>57</sup> The Mission 66 visitor center was “a viewing platform, in which views from interior spaces, roof terraces, and adjacent outdoors terraces or amphitheaters were calculated as flowing, sequential spaces.”<sup>58</sup>

Using these concepts, Mission 66 designers created a distinct visitor experience of the national parks centered on the new prevalence of automobiles. This visitor experience, while

2.7 At Wupatki National Monument, exterior views from the visitor center encourage the visitor to explore the resource.



<sup>56</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 149.

<sup>57</sup> Barbara Clement, Ellen Gage, Timothy Mitchell and Stewart Thompson, “Mission 66 Architecture: Design in the Clouds, Preservation on the Ground” Session at the National Preservation Conference, Spokane, Washington, November 3, 2012, audio recording, <http://www.intelliquestmedia.com/store/search.php? a=E&c=201225>. Accessed February 24, 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 149.

less tangible than modern architectural design, is an integral character-defining feature for Mission 66 visitor centers. A visitor's first encounter with a Mission 66 national park was arriving at the entrance gate by car. From there, the visitor was encouraged to drive to the visitor center through appropriate signage. Depending on the chosen location for the visitor center within the park, this drive could take the visitor past important resources, or could be fairly close to the entrance. Upon arriving at the visitor center, the visitors would park in spaces lining the continuing road, giving a clear indication of the next step in the sequence, the visitor center itself. After entering the visitor center, the visitor would be presented with the information desk, which was a critical tool in the centralization of visitor services. The information desk allowed for "rapid and efficient dissemination of practical park information."<sup>59</sup> Visitor center floor plans encouraged specific visitor flow through the space, beginning at the information desk and proceeding through the interpretation area. This flow was encouraged by wide entrances and exits, open floor plans, ramps, and enticing views of the next space in the sequence. After receiving information at the information desk, visitors entered a small interpretation area. Upon exiting the interpretation area, the visitor would be presented with a view of the resource or an exterior area, which was meant to encourage the visitor to continue exploring the park. The next step in the sequence was experiencing the actual resources itself. A continuing road encouraged visitors to drive throughout the park, stopping at points of interest along the way. Often, these points included short one to two mile trails that provided additional views and interpretation. This specifically designed flow created a unique visitor experience, and exemplified the new, shorter visits Americans were making to the national parks. This flow was conceived as a whole; the success of each space is dependent on the use and program of the space preceding it.

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<sup>59</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 269.



Mission 66 visitor centers also responded to a number of new programming needs that resulted in additional character-defining features. One of these new programs was an increase in park interpretation. The visitor center as a viewing platform related directly to the NPS's interpretation goals. Prior to Mission 66, park interpretation consisted of broad themes of natural and cultural history. Mission 66 policy called for improved interpretation that focused instead on each individual park. The goal was to "provide enough scientific and historical information for visitors to appreciate the park landscapes and resources."<sup>60</sup> At the beginning of Mission 66, most interpretive exhibits were text-heavy. However, Mission 66 funded new interpretive technology. Park films, slides, sound recordings, electric maps, and visitor-activated audio stations provided visitors with new educational experiences.<sup>61</sup> Throughout Mission 66, the best interpretation tool continued to be the parks themselves. Experiencing the actual resource being interpreted could not compete with even the most technologically

<sup>60</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 184.

<sup>61</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*.



advanced displays.<sup>62</sup> Because of this, proximity to the park's most precious resources was key. Visitor centers with large windows and viewing platforms emphasized the importance of the actual resource in the interpretation program. The inclusion of interpretation, and the use of views in that interpretation, is another character-defining feature of Mission 66 visitor centers.

The site chosen for visitor centers is a hallmark of Mission 66 and a character-defining feature as well. Mission 66 visitor centers were sited according to interpretation goals and overall park circulation plans. The most common sites for visitor centers were near the park entrance or adjacent to significant park resources. The site of visitor centers was chosen with an awareness of modern park circulation plans that emphasized the use of automobiles.<sup>63</sup>

Broadening our understanding of the significance of Mission 66 visitor centers, and what elements are important in their future preservation, can allow more flexibility in their future use. The construction of Mission 66 visitor centers was the physical result of a shift in NPS philosophies about park architecture and development at a time of essential tension and transition in the national parks. Faced with insufficient funds, increased visitation, and changing programming needs, a drastic re-evaluation of NPS values was required. In the years following Mission 66, the program became misunderstood within the NPS. Current programming requirements, visitation increases, and funding challenges within the NPS are strikingly similar to pre-Mission 66 issues. An investigation of the true significance of Mission 66 visitor centers, and the issues which lead to their construction, could inform NPS decisions today. To do this, it is important to understand the factors which lead to the creation of Mission 66, and why it was so widely rejected in the NPS after the program ended.

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<sup>62</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 194.

<sup>63</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 269.

## CHAPTER 3 - From Criticism To Preservation

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Criticism of Mission 66 began almost simultaneously with the program's debut. Misunderstanding about Mission 66 goals intensified as the environmental movement progressed. As a result, the program's visitor centers were under appreciated and misunderstood. In 1975, William W. Dunmire, chief of the Interpretation Division, wrote "Today we are shifting emphasis away from building more centers that may, in fact, impinge on a visitor's limited time in a park to onsite, outdoor facilities and services that more directly relate to park resources."<sup>64</sup> Additionally, living history became a popular way of narrating park stories at historical parks over text-heavy visitor center exhibits. At natural parks, visitors were encouraged to spend less time in the visitor center and more time exploring the resource. In 1986, noted NPS historian Barry Mackintosh, wrote that the entire concept of placing visitor centers in every park was "misguided" and reflected "a lack of confidence in personal interpretive services."<sup>65</sup> This represents a shift in NPS interpretation strategy, and a misunderstanding of how visitor centers were meant to function.

The current major criticism of Mission 66 is that the visitor centers are poorly sited. Critics feel that some Mission 66 visitor centers exemplify poor park development, infringing on the park's resources and interrupting the visitors' experience of the park. However, as discussed previously, the siting of Mission 66 visitor centers was a deliberate and conscious decision for Mission 66 planners. Mission 66 designers and planners saw their work as in keeping with traditional NPS values. The sites chosen for visitor centers were active components of the larger visitor experience being created. Conservation of resources and development for visitor use was not seen as contradictory; rather, Mission 66 philosophy saw development and conservation as complimentary goals. Recreation and commercial interests within the national parks were encouraged to generate interest and use. However, critics of the program argue that this interpretation of NPS values threatens the very resources that the NPS

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<sup>64</sup> William W. Dunmire, "Report on Interpretation," 1975, History of Interpretation files, National Park Service History Collection, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, quoted in Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh2/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh2/index.htm).

<sup>65</sup> Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*.

was formed to protect. This view became popular as Mission 66 was in its waning years, and has strengthened in the decades since its completion.

A shift in development philosophy post-Mission 66 accompanied a shift in taste. While modern architecture within national parks had critics from the beginning,<sup>66</sup> today rustic architecture is again the preferred design for park buildings.<sup>67</sup> Even as Mission 66 drew to a close, many American architects were beginning to reject modern design. Mission 66 adopted Modernism on the tail end of the movement, and as a result, these projects were quickly rejected in favor of Post-Modern styles.<sup>68</sup> In the national parks, the disappearance of modern

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<sup>66</sup> Even before Mission 66 officially began, modern buildings within the parks were debated in the media. In the *New York Times* article "Controversy Over Lodge in the West," Jack Goodman described the debate over Underwood's Jackson Lodge in Grand Teton National Park. Goodman wrote that locals called the Lodge a "slab-sided, concrete abomination," while architectural critics defended it as "an admirable blending of practical, modern architecture with western motifs." Goodman's article was a forewarning of the criticism to come. As more modern visitor centers were built, conservation critics bemoaned the loss of traditional rustic styles. One such critic was Weldon F. Heald, a well-known conservationist and writer. In 1961, Heald attacked Mission 66 for "rapidly bringing about the 'urbanization of the National Parks.'" Heald felt that too many buildings were being built in the parks, and that the modern style was particularly offensive. Heald called modern architecture in the national parks "incongruous and disturbing," "the most discordant note" and "a distinct urban intrusion in the native wilderness."<sup>66</sup> Heald advocated for a return to rustic architecture, which he felt made individual parks unique. Devereux Butcher, a National Parks Association board member, and Ansel Adams, a noted photographer and environmentalist, agreed. Both wrote articles attacking Mission 66 designs. See Jack Goodman, "Controversy Over Lodge in the West," *New York Times*, August 7, 1955, 27; Weldon F. Heald, "Urbanization of the National Parks" *National Parks Magazine* 35, no. 160, January 1961, 108; Devereux Butcher, "For a Return to Harmony in Park Architecture" *National Parks Magazine* 26, no. 111, October, 1952, 150-157 and Ansel Adams, "Yosemite-1958 Compromise in Action," *National Parks Magazine*, October-December 1958, 166-175, 190.

<sup>67</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and The National Park Dilemma*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007): 339.

<sup>68</sup> Not all Modern architecture within national parks was criticized. Buildings by internationally known architects often gained national acceptance. *Architectural Record* covered the design of visitor centers intermittently during Mission 66. In 1956, Ernest Mickel wrote "Mission 66: A New Challenge to Architects," which called Mission 66 visitor centers "simple contemporary buildings that perform their assigned function and respect their environment." The Painted Desert Visitor Center at the Petrified National Forest, designed by Richard Neutra, won a *Progressive Architecture* award in 1959. *Progressive Architecture* weighed in on the use of modern architecture in the national parks, writing, "Disappearing, one hopes are the rustic-rock snuggery and giant-sized log cabin previously favored." In 1969, the American Institute of Architects recognized Mission 66 visitor centers for their "sensitive programing and careful planning." The AIA wrote that Mission 66 visitor centers were "innovative in design" and that they "reflect a creative architecture attuned to the natural and historical settings." See Ernest Mickel, "Mission 66, A New Challenge to Architects: Long Range Building Plan for National Parks," *Architectural Record* 120, no. 2, August 1956, 32; "Two Visitor Centers Exemplify New Park Architecture" *Progressive Architecture* 40, no. 2, February 1959, 87 and Letter from Robert L. Hawk, Committee on Awards and Exhibits, Washington Metropolitan Chapter AIA to Norman C Fletcher, FAIA, Chairman Committee on Institutional Honors Re: Citation of an Organization for Achievement in Architecture and Planning, File Binder of Mission 66 Architecture Presentation Submitted to the American Institute of Architects, October 9, 1969, Mission 66 Program History. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, Box A8213.

design meant that modern visitor centers would not continue to symbolize the streamlined, innovative progress the NPS hoped to represent. Much like the disdain for rustic architecture at the onset of Mission 66, modern architecture was soon seen as inappropriate and outdated. Sarah Allaback writes “The next two decades would bring architectural cynicism that dissolved faith in modernist design.”<sup>69</sup> In addition, modern architecture aged poorly within the park system. Lack of maintenance funds left the buildings, which were intended to be clean and sleek, with a patina that was more suited to rustic designs.<sup>70</sup> This disdain for modern buildings after deferred maintenance is reminiscent of the factors behind the adoption of modern architecture initially. Post-World War II, as park service funds remained low, maintenance for rustic-style buildings was deferred. This led to a backlash against the rustic style and the eventual adoption of Modernism. The reaction against modern architectural styles within the parks today, for the same reason, exhibits a lack of understanding about circular trends in NPS design, funding, and building maintenance.

Current misunderstanding about Mission 66 and new programmatic requirements for visitor centers has resulted, in some cases, in the demolition of visitor centers without consideration of their historical significance. In other cases, inappropriate or character-altering additions and renovations threaten the historical integrity of the buildings. After outcry from preservationists and the public, the NPS agreed to investigate the historical significance of the Mission 66 program. Many Mission 66 buildings are approaching fifty years of age, making them eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The sheer number of buildings constructed during the Mission 66 era required the NPS to actively investigate their significance and future treatment. To do this, the NPS launched a major research initiative to guide the identification, evaluation, and stewardship of Mission 66 buildings.<sup>71</sup>

*Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, written by Sarah Allaback, was the first study generated by this initiative. Allaback’s in-depth study of visitor centers provides a framework for evaluating the initial importance of this original building typology.

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<sup>69</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, NPS, 2000): 252.

<sup>70</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 252.

<sup>71</sup> Timothy M. Davis, “Mission 66 Initiative,” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 1, no. 1 2003.

The study investigates the history of the Mission 66 program and the use of modern architecture within the national parks. In addition, Allaback presents case studies on five prominent Mission 66 visitor centers: the Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument, the Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center, the Painted Desert Community at Petrified Forest National Park, the Cyclorama Building at Gettysburg National Military Park, and the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center at Rocky Mountain National Park. Allaback chose these visitor centers because they were ambitious projects, and the work of significant American architectural firms. The majority of her research focused on these iconic, well-known visitor centers. From this study, Allaback concluded that Mission 66 visitor centers set a precedent for all park planning to follow, and as a result, are a significant building type worthy of preservation. Allaback writes, "the visitor center may be the National Park Service's most significant contribution to American architecture. The historical value of the original visitor centers should not be underestimated."<sup>72</sup>



3.1 The Cyclorama Center at Gettysburg National Military Park, designed by Richard Neutra.

Allaback's study was published in 2000. At that time, three Mission 66 visitor centers were already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, designed by Taliesin Associated Architects in 1964, was the first Mission 66 visitor center to be listed, less than twenty years after its construction. The visitor center was

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<sup>72</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 253.

included in the Rocky Mountain National Park Utility Area Historic District as a building contributing to the architectural character and Mission 66 legacy of the district. In 2001, it was separately declared a National Historic Landmark under Criterion A for its association with Mission 66 and Criterion C for its exceptional architecture and connection with Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers.<sup>73</sup> The next visitor center to be listed on the National Register was the Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument. The Quarry Visitor Center was listed on the National Register in 1986. Like the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, the Quarry Visitor Center was later declared a National Historic Landmark under Criteria A and C. The visitor center at the Wright Brothers National Memorial was listed in 1999, as a contributing building in a National Monument District. By 2000, several other buildings had been deemed eligible for the National Register, but were not yet listed.

Allaback used her study and the visitor centers already listed on the National Register to create guidelines for determining the significance of additional Mission 66 visitor centers.<sup>74</sup> These guidelines focus largely on the architectural significance of modern styles within the national parks, and on the prominence of the original architect. Three years after Sarah Allaback's study was published, the NPS Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program held a Mission 66 research workshop. Workshop participants included NPS staff, National Register staff, State Historic Preservation Office staff and noted architectural historians, including Ethan Carr and Richard Longstreth. From the workshop, participants agreed that Mission 66 resources were a diverse and often contested collection. Rather than focusing on the NPS's frustration with current Mission 66 buildings, the group advised that the successes of the Mission 66 program should be highlighted. Mission 66 should be recognized as a precursor to the planning, development and circulation patterns in today's parks. The group also agreed that association with Mission 66 alone did not make a resource significant. The qualifications outlined by Allaback should inform National Register listings. The group

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<sup>73</sup> "Utility Area HD Beaver Meadows Visitor Center," *List of Classified Structures*, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, <http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/>. Accessed March 10, 2013.

<sup>74</sup> For a full description of Allaback's standards for significance evaluation, see Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000): 267-278.

recommended that a comprehensive context study be conducted to provide a history of the Mission 66 program and the cultural factors that influenced it to aid in determining significance of individual buildings or districts.<sup>75</sup>

Ethan Carr published the context study in 2008. The study traced Mission 66 origins and evolution, and related it to broader trends in American history during the mid-twentieth century. The study echoes Sarah Allaback's efforts to make a case for the preservation of Mission 66 buildings.

Since the initial research efforts by the NPS and others, several additional visitor centers have been listed on the National Register using Sarah Allaback's criteria as a guide. Currently, at least six visitor centers are listed on the National Register, either individually or as contributing buildings in a Mission 66 historic district. The buildings are listed under Criterion A for their association with Mission 66, as a precursor to contemporary park planning and development, and under Criterion C as examples of modern architecture in the national parks. Most visitor centers listed were designed by nationally or internationally known architects, and do not always reflect more typical visitor center designs. Many additional visitor centers have been deemed eligible for listing on the National Register by State Historic Preservation Offices, but have yet to be nominated.

Despite these preservation efforts and an increased understanding of Mission 66 history, Mission 66 visitor centers continue to be altered or demolished in large numbers. Several times, visitor centers have been demolished even after being determined significant or eligible for the National Register. The Gettysburg Cyclorama, designed by Richard Neutra, was determined eligible for the National Register, but was demolished after a lengthy court battle attempted to save the building. The Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument, which launched the national career of Anshen & Allen, was replaced in 2008.<sup>76</sup>

### **Determining the Significance of Mission 66 Visitor Centers Today**

Because Mission 66 visitor centers continue to be threatened and underappreciated, the standards for determining significance should be revisited. The initial standards for

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<sup>75</sup> Davis, "Mission 66 Initiative."

<sup>76</sup>Allaback and Carr, "Quarry Visitor Center," 8.

determining significance of Mission 66 visitor centers relies heavily on their modern architectural style, the integrity of the original construction materials, and the notoriety of the architect. However, visitor centers are also noteworthy for their connection with the rise of personal car ownership and American recreational activities. Mission 66 is symbolic of a larger trend in American history surrounding the evolution of American pastimes and recreation. When the NPS was founded in 1916, visitors to the parks were often wealthy urban residents seeking a respite from the ills of city life. At that time, visitors would travel to the national parks by train, and spend as long as a month exploring a single park. After World War II, leisure time and recreation became a national characteristic, rather than just an activity for the wealthy. Additionally, a rise in personal car ownership and the Federal Highway Act gave Americans a new mobility. The family summer vacation became an annual event for middle class families all across the country. The drastic rise in national park visitation, which spurred visitor center construction, exemplifies this trend. As Americans became visiting the national parks in record numbers, the NPS struggled to adapt. The Mission 66 visitor center was the NPS's response to a trend that was occurring all over the country.

Mission 66 visitor centers were the physical result of a modernization trend occurring in all aspects of American life after World War II. Much like modern shopping centers, visitor centers reflected the desire for efficiency and centralization. Rather than spending months at a time in a single park, visitors would now stop at a park for only a day or two. The demographic of visitors had changed as well. Middle class families made up the majority of national park visitors. This meant that the NPS now needed to cater to a wider range of visitors in less time. The visitor center created a way to disseminate information and interpretation quickly and efficiently to large groups of people. The visitor centers, while architecturally significant, were also significant for the visitor experience they attempted to create. The NPS used visitor centers to shape the way the public experienced the parks. This experience was as groundbreaking as the modern materials and style that set these buildings apart from traditional NPS architecture. Using this idea, more Mission 66 visitor centers could be listed to the National Register under criterion A, for their association with larger trends of American recreation and modernization.



Today, the way visitors experience the national parks is shifting once again. A more comprehensive look at current park needs in relation to the remaining Mission 66 visitor centers is needed if more buildings are to be saved. The following chapters will investigate the current state of Mission 66 visitor centers through a building inventory, and outline current NPS programming requirements for contemporary visitor centers. Character-defining features of existing Mission 66 visitor centers need to be reconciled with changing programmatic needs in order to preserve more Mission 66 visitor centers in the future.

## CHAPTER 4 - Visitor Center Inventory

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It is important to understand the current inventory of Mission 66 visitor centers to guide their future preservation. A survey of ninety-one Mission 66 visitor centers was conducted to determine how many have been demolished, how many have been significantly altered, and how many are extant with no major renovations. This was done in relation to earlier assessments to determine what has changed physically, but also if the perception of these buildings has evolved since the initial NPS studies.

In *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, Sarah Allaback compiled a list of Mission 66 visitor centers by examining drawings at the NPS Denver Service Center (DSC), and comparing building records in the NPS History Collection at the Harpers Ferry Center.<sup>77</sup> In her list, Allaback also included visitor centers built during Mission 66 that were created through substantial additions and renovations to existing buildings. To reflect the entire Mission 66 period of significance, and not just the official program length, Allaback listed visitor centers built earlier than 1956, and visitor centers which were not completed until after Mission 66 officially ended in 1966. Allaback writes that a true inventory of all Mission 66 buildings would include those that set a precedent for visitor centers, and buildings built during the "Parkscape" program, which was initiated by Conrad Wirth's successor, George B. Hartzog, in 1966.<sup>78</sup> Her list identifies one hundred and ten Mission 66 visitor centers and sixteen visitor center "additions" built or designed between 1953 and 1971.

For the inventory included in this thesis, Allaback's original list was adapted to include only those visitor centers designed during the official Mission 66 program (1956-1966) and only new construction, not additions or significant renovations. While additions and renovations conducted during the Mission 66 program are important to the influence and impact of the program, they had existing constraints that effected design and siting decisions, and therefore were eliminated from this inventory. These parameters resulted in a list of ninety-one visitor

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<sup>77</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000): 255.

<sup>78</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 267.

centers which were constructed under the Mission 66 program. The full survey is included in Appendix I.

The goal of this survey was to uncover how many Mission 66 visitor centers are still extant, and if conditions for preservation have worsened since the initial NPS studies. Information was obtained from individual park websites, General Management Plans, interpretation plans, Classified Structures reports, park planning websites, newspaper articles, and limited personal visitation. The current status of the visitor centers was divided into six different categories, symbolized by letters A – F. Group A represents visitor centers which were demolished or rendered obsolete by a new visitor center. Group B visitor centers have undergone significant renovations, resulting in the loss of all or most of their Mission 66 character-defining features. Group C visitor centers have undergone less extensive renovations. Some character-defining features may be lost, but the majority is still extant. Group D visitor centers have been renovated, but with the Mission 66 character-defining features acknowledged and preserved. Group E visitor centers are in use with no known major renovations, and Group F visitor centers are in use, but no longer as the primary visitor center or with significantly altered programming.

In addition to this information, the main interpretive goal of the park, conservation, recreation, or history, was recorded to delineate between different interpretation programming requirements. The private partner for the park was listed as well, as was any National Register information.

Analysis of the survey results provides information about how Mission 66 visitor centers are being used and altered today, especially in light of the NPS's research initiative. A specific breakdown of the results is listed on the following page.

Group A: Visitor center demolished or replaced

-Total: 16 (17.6%)

Group B: A significant renovation, resulting in the loss of all or most of the Mission 66 character-defining features

-Total: 5 (5.5%)

Group C: A renovation resulting in the loss of at least one, but less than the majority, of Mission 66 character-defining features. This group often included the upgrading or replacement of park interpretive exhibits.

-Total: 16 (17.6%)

Group D: Renovated, but Mission 66 character-defining features are preserved

-Total: 6 (9.9%)

Group E: Visitor Center in use with no known major renovations

-Total: 46 (50.5%)

Group F: Visitor Center repurposed or programming significantly changed

-Total: 2 (2.2%)

These numbers indicate that there are many Mission 66 visitor centers remaining with a high degree of integrity. Group E represents the highest number of Mission 66 visitor centers, accounting for 50.5% of the buildings surveyed. However, the results suggest that when visitor centers are altered, renovations tend to be extensive or inappropriate. For example, in many cases, Group B visitor centers are considered completely new buildings. At Mammoth Cave National Park, the visitor center was stripped to its shell and rebuilt with a new addition.<sup>79</sup> While the Mission 66 visitor center was not truly demolished, the Mission 66 design was essentially lost. In 2008, the visitor center at Arches National Park was “recycled and rehabilitated” by completely incorporating it into a new building.<sup>80</sup> Annual visits to both these national parks have increased dramatically since the Mission 66 era, making extensive

<sup>79</sup> Robin L. Minor, “Mammoth Cave National Park Visitor Center gets major overhaul,” *The Bowling Green Daily News*, September 25, 2010. [http://www.bgdailynews.com/news/mammoth-cave-national-park-visitors-center-gets-major-overhaul/article\\_cb9eccc1-5f90-52af-a0fa-9eb79847542b.html](http://www.bgdailynews.com/news/mammoth-cave-national-park-visitors-center-gets-major-overhaul/article_cb9eccc1-5f90-52af-a0fa-9eb79847542b.html). Accessed March 10, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> “Arches new visitor center nearly complete,” *The Times-Independent*, 2008, [http://moabtimes.com/pages/full\\_story/push?article-Arches-+new+visitor+center+nearly+complete%20&id=68824](http://moabtimes.com/pages/full_story/push?article-Arches-+new+visitor+center+nearly+complete%20&id=68824).

renovations necessary. This is a typical challenge all Mission 66 visitor centers face. However, the resulting visitor centers are indistinguishable from a completely new building. The Mission 66 buildings are gone. Therefore, it is appropriate to combine the Group B and Group A numbers into one statistic. When this is done, these categories represent 23.1% of the total building inventory, becoming the second most common treatment, after Group E (extant with no known renovations.) This is concerning because it indicates that when existing visitor centers are no longer accommodating park needs, demolition, replacement or total renovation is preferred over more sensitive alterations.

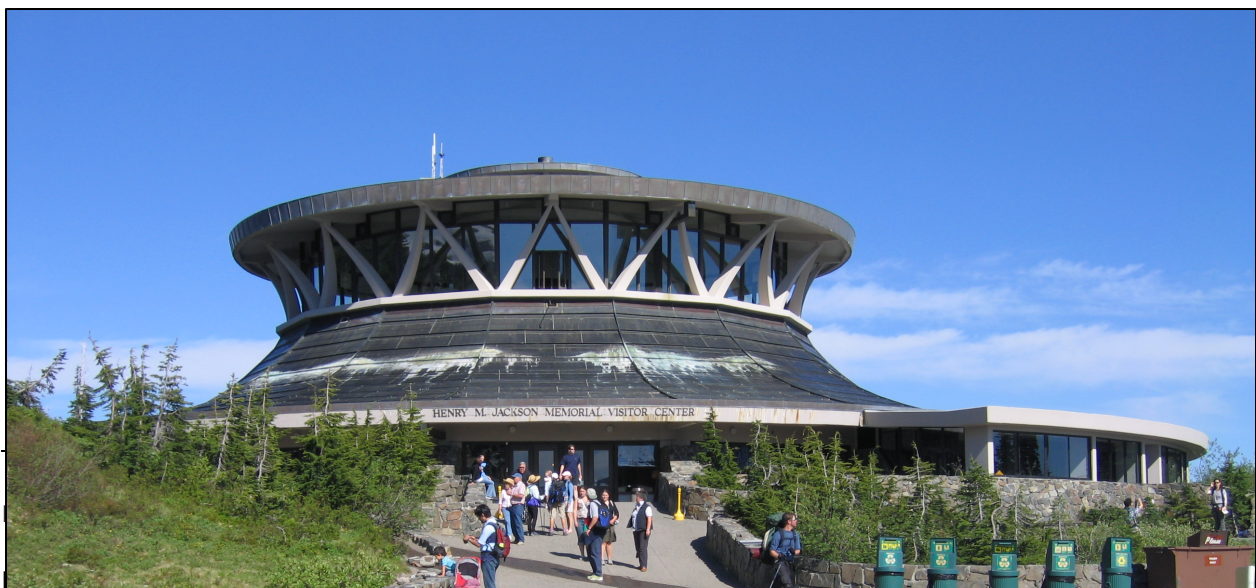
The survey suggests that even when visitor centers undergo less extensive renovations, these renovations are not likely to take Mission 66 character-defining features into account. Group C, visitor centers with renovations that destroyed character-defining features, represents 17.6% of the survey, while only 9.9% of buildings were renovated with the character-defining features preserved (Group D). One of the most devastating alterations in Group C is the replacement of flat roofs with pitched roofs. This alteration is particularly harmful to Mission 66 buildings because it alters the entire exterior character of the building, and destroys the low massing typical of Mission 66 designs. This alteration was done at the Mound City Visitor Center in Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, and at the visitor center in the Effigy Mounds National Monument. Pitched roofs are almost always added due to water penetration and escalating maintenance costs, a common issue in Mission 66 buildings, and with flat roofs in general. Pitched roofs are often clad in colored, metal standing-seam roofing. The NPS prefers this covering because it is durable and requires less maintenance over time. However, the inclusion of a colored standing-seam roof further destroys the initial design intent, which focused on unobtrusive earth tones and textures.

The fact that 50.5% of Mission 66 visitor centers remain with high levels of integrity is encouraging. Many of these visitor centers are exemplarily Mission 66 designs, created by the NPS's in-house architects. Interestingly, the more iconic Mission 66 visitor centers, designed by internationally or nationally known architects, seem to be at a higher risk of demolition. Nationally and internationally recognized architecture firms designed a total of seven visitor centers in this inventory. The Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument launched

the national career of Anshen and Allen, and the firm later designed the Lodgepole Visitor Center as well.<sup>81</sup> Mitchell-Giurgola, Eero Saarinen, Taliesin Associated Architects, and Neutra and Alexander also designed visitor centers for Mission 66. Unfortunately, of these nationally and internationally significant designs, two, the Quarry Visitor Center and the Cyclorama Center at Gettysburg National Military Park have been lost. The loss of these buildings may have contributed to the public outcry against Mission 66 visitor center alterations because of their iconic nature. The Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center, historically known as the Paradise Visitor Center at Mount Rainier National Park, was not designed by an internationally or nationally known firm, but is a unique design as well. The round building was meant to mimic the mountains behind it, but was immediately criticized for its interesting shape. The visitor center was accused of looking like a “satellite, pagoda, or flying saucer,” and being inappropriate for the landscape.<sup>82</sup>

This survey suggests that visitor centers with iconic designs are more likely to be demolished. In fact, very few Mission 66 visitor centers with distinctive designs remain today. While this represents a loss of exceptional architectural design, it does not reflect the true state of Mission 66 preservation. Mission 66 visitor centers that successfully represent the values and goals of Mission 66 are often the most unassuming and modest designs of the era.

Twelve Mission 66 visitor centers in this survey are listed on the National Register of



4.1 The Henry M. Jackson (Paradise) Visitor Center at Mount Rainier National Park was demolished in 2008.

Historic Places or have been declared eligible for listing. Of those twelve, two, the Gettysburg Cyclorama Center and the Quarry Visitor Center, are no longer extant. This indicates that the NPS will demolish historically significant structures if they are found to no longer function adequately within the park, further proving that standards for appropriately altering Mission 66 visitor centers must be developed.

Additional research on the location of each visitor center within a given park could shine light on current park development philosophies, and how these philosophies impact Mission 66 resources. John D. Cabot's distinct categories for visitor center sites (at park entrance, en route, or at significant resources) could be used to determine which locations of Mission 66 visitor centers are considered most inappropriate today. When Mission 66 visitor centers are demolished and a new visitor center is built in another location, it suggests that the site of the visitor center was considered unsuitable for current park use.

The following chapters will explore the current NPS philosophies toward visitor center siting, and the programming needs for modern visitor centers. Contrasting this information with the design and programming of Mission 66 visitor centers can inform appropriate visitor center renovations and ensure continued preservation of Mission 66 designs.

## CHAPTER 5 - Contemporary Visitor Centers

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In order to guide the future preservation of Mission 66 visitor centers, it is important to understand current criteria for successful visitor centers. While Mission 66 set the standard for how development projects and planning procedures function in today's national park system, several factors, including funding sources, programming needs, siting decisions and design principles have changed significantly since the Mission 66 era.

### NPS Development Policies

Today, the NPS has outlined policies on development within the national parks. These policies are more reflective of Thomas' Vint's "option B," which required as much development as possible to take place outside park boundaries. Only the most necessary construction can today take place within park boundaries or near important resources. The NPS's 2006 *Management Policies* state that whenever possible, new construction should be placed outside of park boundaries. The *Management Policies* mandate that "Wherever feasible and authorized by Congress, major park facilities – especially those that can be shared with other entities- should be developed outside park boundaries."<sup>83</sup> When development does occur within a park, it should be done only after it has been determined that the visitor center cannot exist outside park boundaries, and sited where it would not "create unacceptable environmental impacts." The *Management Policies* instruct "development will not compete with or dominate park features or interfere with natural processes." These guidelines indicate that even when development is sited within park boundaries, it should be as far from significant resources as possible. In addition, the *Management Policies* require that when a building is found to be inappropriately placed, in competition with natural or historic resources, it should be removed. While these values were also defined during the Mission 66 program, it is often not what actually took place. Interpretation strategies during Mission 66 favored placing visitor centers "right on top of the resource"<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "Chapter 9: Facilities" in *Management Policies 2006*, (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2006).

<sup>84</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and The National Park Dilemma*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007): 195.



This conflict between professed values and actual development was most clearly seen at the Gettysburg Cyclorama Center, which was demolished despite being eligible for the National Register. Because the visitor center was placed on a significant portion of the Gettysburg battlefield, park officials felt that removal was the best option for continued protection of the historic resource. However, this location on the battlefield was embraced during Mission 66, and earlier, as the best place for interpretation. Neutra designed observation platforms on the roof of the visitor center, where visitors could view the field where Pickett's Charge unfolded. The entire building was a sequential experience, where tourists would view the battlefield directly after exiting the area that housed the Cyclorama painting and other interpretive tools.<sup>85</sup> In recent years, these viewing platforms were closed.<sup>86</sup> In addition, the Cyclorama was deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, indicating that it was a historic resource worthy of protection. Today, the NPS believes that the Cyclorama Center is an intrusion on the battlefield, rather than tool for interpreting it. In 2008, a new visitor center was constructed outside of the park boundaries, and in 2012 the Cyclorama Center was demolished.

According to policy, demolition should be the last resort for NPS buildings. National parks are instructed to maintain existing buildings as long as possible. Current NPS policies require that existing buildings be used to their fullest extent before new buildings are constructed. New buildings can only be constructed if "existing structures and improvements do not meet essential management needs."<sup>87</sup> To investigate the construction of visitor centers specifically, the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reviewed the planning and construction process for all NPS visitor centers built between 1996 and 2005. The resulting report, which was presented to Congress, outlined the various reasons and costs associated with the new construction of visitor centers. Between 1996 and 2005, eighty new visitor centers

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<sup>85</sup> Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and The National Park Dilemma*, 163.

<sup>86</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000): 136.

<sup>87</sup> "Chapter 9: Facilities" in *Management Policies 2006*,

were built, significantly renovated, or were in the planning stage.<sup>88</sup> The report found that the main reason a new visitor center was constructed or planned was to replace “obsolete or deficient facilities or exhibits.”<sup>89</sup> This is a principle factor in the argument to demolish Mission 66 visitor centers. However, information and interpretation methods often evolve many times during the life of a visitor center. Because Mission 66 was the last large-scale development program within the NPS, many national parks are still using visitor centers that date from the Mission 66 era, but often with new interpretive exhibits in place. While the historical significance of these buildings has already been stated, many park officials continue to feel that these buildings are not meeting specific programming needs, and should be demolished. The GAO report found that in addition to inadequate interpretation, the need for increased space to accommodate more park officials and more visitors was a common complaint and reason behind demolition.

Visitor centers and other NPS facilities are expected to last forty to fifty years without major renovation. The report states that before that time, however, some small updates may need to take place. The visitor center survey reflected this finding, as many Mission 66 visitor centers underwent small renovations and updates to utilities and systems. However, as a building ages, maintenance costs rise as well. If a building becomes too expensive to maintain, it is in danger of being replaced. Deferred maintenance due to lack of funds accelerates this process.

The decision to renovate or demolish is made during the project planning stage, after a deficiency in park services has been identified. Each alternative is weighed during a process which the NPS describes as “value analysis.” When considering demolition, the NPS considers the existing building’s age and condition, location, visitation numbers, maintenance costs, and historical significance. Currently, consideration of many of these factors is working against Mission 66 visitor centers. As these buildings age, it will become increasingly important to evaluate the historical significance of each individual Mission 66 visitor center, and rely on NPS

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<sup>88</sup> “Visitor Center Project Costs, Size, and Functions Vary Widely,” Report to Congressional Requestors. (Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office, July, 2001): 2.

<sup>89</sup> “Visitor Center Project Costs, Size, and Functions Vary Widely,” 2.

policies which encourage retention of existing buildings. In order to make a case for preservation, the significance of each individual building needs to be evaluated. The 2003 NPS research workshop on Mission 66 indicated that association with Mission 66 alone would not automatically qualify a building for preservation. Integrity, character-defining features, and condition, as well as renovation possibilities, will need to be assessed to argue for preservation of these buildings during the value analysis stages.

### NPS Architectural Design Policies

Architectural design within the national parks today is guided by policies that differ only slightly from Mission 66 standards. The 2006 *Management Policies* state that designs should be “harmonious with park resources, compatible with natural processes, esthetically pleasing.”<sup>90</sup> This is a general statement, and could encompass a large variety of designs. Mission 66 planners felt that modern architecture was compatible with natural resources. In fact the *Management Policies* go on to state that architectural designs should “minimize visual intrusions” and should be “differentiated from yet compatible with the landscape’s historic character.”<sup>91</sup> Cecil Doty and other Mission 66 designers chose modern architecture for Mission 66 specifically because they felt that it accomplished these same goals. However, today’s NPS planners interpret these values differently. The NPS Denver Service Center (DSC), which is the central planning, design and construction management arm of the NPS, further outlines design standards for visitor centers on their website. Today’s DSC standards state that designs should

5.1 The South Rim Visitor Center at Grand Canyon National Park. The designs of contemporary visitor centers echo the rustic designs of the CCC era.



be timeless, and should "avoid architectural clichés of the day."<sup>92</sup> This statement speaks to the Mission 66 program directly. While modern designs in the national parks were meant to align to the same values that the NPS embraces today, the modern forms and expressions were certainly of a specific time in architectural trends, as rustic architecture was in the 1920s. This statement suggests that NPS designs today should avoid current architectural styles.

### Visitor Center Programming And Usage

Contemporary visitor center programming continues to incorporate the same basic functions Mission 66 visitor centers were designed to provide. According to the GOA report, most new visitor centers include five basic functions: information, exhibits, restrooms, sales and administration space.<sup>93</sup> What has changed, however, is how these functions are expected to operate and the number of visitors they are expected to serve. In addition, many contemporary visitor centers incorporate additional functions that the original Mission 66 visitor centers did not include. This is largely due to changing visitor expectations, advances in interpretation methods, and an increase in private and commercial activity within the national parks.

In the years after Mission 66, National Park visitation continued to rise. The highest level of visitation was in 1987, with a total of 287 million visits. Since then, visitation has fallen only slightly. In 2007, 276 million people visited the National Parks.<sup>94</sup> In the past five years, visitation to National Parks over all has remained steady.<sup>95</sup> Visitor centers built during Mission 66 are not equipped to serve the level of visitors that the last fifty years have brought. This reoccurring issue is the same one that the Mission 66 program was designed to address.

While interpretation continues to be an important visitor center function, many Mission 66 interpretative exhibits are now forty to fifty years old. As the survey conducted for this thesis indicated, a compelling reason for Mission 66 visitor center renovations is to replace outdated exhibits. Exhibits and other interpretive tools are expected to age faster than the buildings

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<sup>92</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, DSC Workflows, "Design" <http://www.nps.gov/dscw/design.htm>. Accessed March 10, 2013.

<sup>93</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size, and Functions Vary Widely," 3.

<sup>94</sup> Margaret Walls, "Parks and Recreation in the United States: The National Park System," *Backgrounder*, (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 2009): 5.

<sup>95</sup> Walls, "Parks and Recreation in the United States: The National Park System," 5.

themselves, and are often replaced sooner. Information quickly becomes outdated. Additionally, advancements in archival storage and curating, or collection additions, may require additional or upgraded storage. For example, renovations at the Manassas Visitor Center at Kennesaw Mountain National Park included updating artifact storage to temperature controlled cases, as well as an addition so that more of the park's collection could be shown.<sup>96</sup> Artifact storage is an example of an additional function unique to a specific park, making renovations necessary.

Interpretation within the visitor center is still customary, but the way that interpretive exhibits are presented to the public is changing. Mission 66 exhibits relied heavily on "book on the wall" interpretive tools. This strategy was used especially at historic battlefields where the goal is to tell the story of a site that has very little physical remains from the historic event. Text-heavy exhibits were laid out in sequence.<sup>97</sup> This style of interpretation was abandoned in the waning years of Mission 66. After Conrad Wirth resigned, George B. Hartzog appointed a Museum Study Team to investigate new forms of interpretation. The team recommended that more information be conveyed through audiovisual forms,<sup>98</sup> and NPS educational strategies moved away from text-heavy exhibits, making Mission 66 interpretation appear outdated and cumbersome.

Today, many visitors access information about a park online before visiting. Because of this, visitors no longer want to be presented with a mere list of facts that could have been learned from other sources. Instead, the NPS is embracing digital technology as a way to offer more interactive and customized interpretative experiences. Digital wayside stations and small handheld devices are replacing large, text-heavy displays. In some cases, digital technology may eliminate the need for interpretation in the visitor center completely, as portable technologies, such as tablets and smartphones, can be carried throughout the park.<sup>99</sup> However,

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<sup>96</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size, and Functions Vary Widely," 13.

<sup>97</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*, (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986).

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh2/directions\\_museums.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh2/directions_museums.htm)

<sup>98</sup> Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*.

<sup>99</sup> Laura Peterson, "Traditional Visitor Center May Fade as NPS Embraces Digital Age," *New York Times* June 2, 2011.

the level of interpretation required at each individual park varies greatly. As discussed previously, battlefields and other historic sites require more interpretation because of the lack of physical remains. Without correct levels of interpretation, visitors only see an empty field. Knowledge of the events that occurred is necessary to appreciate the landscape.<sup>100</sup>

Recreation within the national parks is changing as well, putting additional strains on Mission 66 visitor centers. Mission 66 was a response to the rise of leisure time and recreation in America, and the ORRRC further increased recreational parks and funding. By the end of Mission 66, recreation and leisure time were firmly planted in American culture. This has increased recreational use of the parks, requiring additional services within visitor centers. For example, in many parks that allowing camping, bear canisters are required to protect wildlife from campers and campers from wildlife. Visitor centers distribute the bear canisters to campers, requiring additional storage space that Mission 66 visitor centers were not designed to provide.<sup>101</sup>

While all visitor centers continue to contain the basic functions that Mission 66 established, many include additional services specific to the park. This could include headquarters space, concessioner operated tours, gift shops, restaurants, or hotels, additional curatorial space, and extensive museum space, among others.<sup>102</sup> The GOA report found that when visitor centers did have additional functions in the same buildings, they included an average of six additional services, making these visitor centers more like park supercenters.<sup>103</sup> Visitor centers of this size could dominate a visitor's experience in the park. Mission 66 visitor centers, while often placed near resources, were meant to only be a stop in a visitor's tour of the park. Mission 66 planners did not want visitor centers to replace on-site or in-person experiences. Rather, they were meant to augment the experience and communicate major elements of the park story before urging the visitor out into the park itself. Visitor centers with

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<sup>100</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*.

<sup>101</sup> Barbara Clement, Ellen Gage, Tim Mitchell, and Stewart Thompson, "Mission 66 Architecture: Design in the Clouds, Preservation on the Ground," Session at the National Preservation Conference, Spokane, Washington. November 3, 2012. Audio recording, <http://www.intelliquestmedia.com/store/search.php?a=E&c=201225>. Accessed February 24, 2013.

<sup>102</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size, and Functions Vary Widely," 20.

<sup>103</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely," 18.

too many services or functions run the risk of becoming the destination point in a park, replacing the resources themselves.

### Construction Funding And Cost

The cost of building new visitor centers, and the way that construction is funded, is also important for the preservation of Mission 66 visitor centers, because it in turn influences expected visitor center functions and value analysis decisions. In general, new visitor center construction costs twice as much as renovation.<sup>104</sup> This means that it is usually more economical for a park to renovate a Mission 66 visitor center than demolish it. Renovations that retain important character-defining features should not cost more than other renovation options. In addition, the more functions a visitor center provides, the more expensive new construction or renovation will be. This is a further argument for the retention of Mission 66 visitor centers. Because of the discrepancy in number of functions included in visitor centers, the cost and size of renovations and new construction between 1996 and 2005 has varied greatly.<sup>105</sup> For example, the new Great Smokey Mountains visitor center renovation included an interior remodel and an auditorium addition. The entire project cost only \$500,000. Meanwhile, the new Gettysburg National Military Park visitor center, which replaced the Cyclorama Center, cost over \$39 million to construct.<sup>106</sup> The Gettysburg visitor center includes several additional functions, including a large bookstore, dining room, theater, museum, and office space for the park's private partner. The 118,000 square foot facility is the largest in the NPS.<sup>107</sup>

Like the cost of visitor center construction and renovation, the way these projects are funded varies widely as well. Between 1996 and 2005, an average of 60% of the total cost of a visitor center construction or renovation projects were funded by NPS appropriations from Congress. The other 40% needed for projects came from a wide variety of funding sources, including private park partners, park fees, federal highway funds, and other government and state entities.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely," 16.

<sup>105</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely," 17.

<sup>106</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely," 14.

<sup>107</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely," 11.

<sup>108</sup> "Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely," 3.

Most visitor centers constructed today are the result of a combination of public and private funds. Since the Mission 66 era, private financial support has become increasingly important for national parks. Even at the formation of Mission 66, NPS policies stated that more services should be provided by "greater participation of private enterprise."<sup>109</sup> This suggests that as early as 1956, funding in the national parks was trending toward more private involvement. In 1967, the National Park Foundation, a private nonprofit, was formed to provide financial aid to all national parks.<sup>110</sup> In 1990, Barry Mackintosh wrote in *National Park Service: The First 75 Years* that as the NPS grows, and development pressures increase, it will soon become impossible for national parks to survive without private support. He wrote that the NPS could not "be expected to shoulder alone the burden of protection other threatened nationally significant lands and resources. The call for cooperation and partnerships with others may not be new, but it is more vital than ever."<sup>111</sup> This sentiment was affirmed when a government-wide effort to downsize and restructure began in 1995. The NPS reduced its national and regional offices, cutting staffing by 40%.<sup>112</sup> This put more autonomy in individual parks, both in terms of supervision and funding. It also decentralized authority and made over-arching NPS philosophies harder to discern. In the following years, the Clinton administration encouraged the national parks to established public-private partnerships.<sup>113</sup> In 1996, Congress created the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program, which authorized individual national parks to charge fees for recreational activities, such as camping. The park was allowed to retain 80% of the fees charged for their own use. The 1998 Omnibus Management Act allowed the NPS to retain concessions' franchise fees in the park in which they were collected as well. This encouraged individual parks to partner with commercial interests to provide visitor services such as lodging,

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<sup>109</sup> "Mission 66 Progress Report" United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, March 1966, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Margaret Walls, "Parks and Recreation in the United States: The National Park System," 9.

<sup>111</sup> "Partners and Alliances" in Barry Mackintosh, *National Park Service: The First 75 Years*, (Washington, DC: Eastern National Park & Monument Association, 1990), [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/sontag/sontag7.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/sontag7.htm). Accessed March 12, 2013.

<sup>112</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *The National Park Service: A Brief History*. (Washington, DC, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999): <http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/hisnps/NPShistory/npshisto.htm>. Accessed January 20, 2013.

<sup>113</sup> Fred A. Bernstein, "Mission 66," *Architecture*. December 2000. <http://fredbernstein.com/articles/display.asp?id=41>. Accessed November 12, 2013.



refreshments, and recreational activities. Under the Bush administration, these acts were renewed and continue in a similar form today. These acts have caused increased commercial and recreational activities and private partnerships within individual national parks. Proponents claim that these actions increase private investment, and therefore provide better services and protection for the national parks. Recreation is a public use of the park, and should be encouraged. However, critics worry that encouraging commercial and private interests “direct the management of our public lands down a dangerous path that leads towards commercialization and privatization and away from the ‘public good.’”<sup>114</sup>

While the level of private funding, recreation, philanthropy and commercial activity varies drastically between parks, every single national park surveyed for this study had some form of a private partner. These partners range from Friends groups to concession partners with purely commercial interests, to large non-profit organizations that own and manage entire visitor centers, such as the Gettysburg Foundation at Gettysburg National Military Park. The Gettysburg visitor center was funded entirely through earmarked government funds and private funds, with no construction support coming from the NPS annual appropriations.<sup>115</sup> Other non-profit organizations serve several parks at once. Organizations have been formed to provide services to several small parks in the same area, such as the Eastern and Western National Parks Associations. These organizations run the bookstores at many smaller national parks, providing the park with additional revenue streams.

With the rise of private and commercial interests, governmental funding for the national parks has been on a “slow but steady” decline in the past twenty years. Parks regularly operate on two-thirds of their budgetary requirements.<sup>116</sup> This means that funding from private partners has become even more important. Current political and economic issues have meant even greater funding cuts for the parks in the past two years. Many planned construction projects

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<sup>114</sup> Bryan Faehner, “The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act: How Recreation Access Fees are Transforming Public Land Recreation.” *Spring Equinox* 11, no. 1, 2006. <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc2314.ashx>

<sup>115</sup> Barbara Sardella, Gettysburg Foundation Secretary and General Counsel, conversation with author, March 20, 2013.

<sup>116</sup> Walls, “Parks and Recreation in the United States: The National Park System,” 7-8.

are on hold because of funding uncertainties.<sup>117</sup> In 2013, the NPS budget will include \$67.2 million in reductions to park operations and construction.<sup>118</sup> Only “the highest priority requirements” will be addressed. It is possible that no new facilities, including visitor centers, will be constructed in the national parks this year. The construction projects that do take place will only be those that are “the most critical life/health/safety, resource protection and emergency projects.”<sup>119</sup> These circumstances are reminiscent of the lack of funding which spurred the creation of Mission 66 in the 1950s.

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<sup>117</sup> “Visitor Center Project Costs, Size and Functions Vary Widely,” 8.

<sup>118</sup> “Budget Justifications and Performance Information, Fiscal Year 2013,” (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2013): overview-2.

<sup>119</sup> “Budget Justifications and Performance Information, Fiscal Year 2013,” const-6.

## CHAPTER 6 - Recommendations For The Future

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Because of the construction moratorium, many Mission 66 visitor centers are in use right now, but are operating with deficiencies and deferred maintenance. This continued lack of maintenance increases the likelihood that Mission 66 visitor centers will be considered inadequate and too expensive to repair in the future. As the economic climate improves, these buildings will become targets for renovation or demolition. It is unrealistic to assume that Mission 66 visitor centers can be preserved in their current states and still be viable resource for the NPS. To continue to function as visitor centers, many Mission 66 visitor centers will need to be altered or repurposed to meet current programming needs. Ethan Carr writes that “trying to fit fifty years’ worth of such programmatic growth – along with larger numbers of visitors- into a Mission 66 visitor center can of course prove impossible.”<sup>120</sup> It will be necessary to augment many visitor centers so they can continue to be used.

Altering Mission 66 visitor centers while preserving character-defining features is often difficult because the buildings were designed to fit a very specific program. They do not adapt well to changing needs.<sup>121</sup> In addition, the designs were conceived as an interconnected system, and altering one part could jeopardize the success of the entire design. However, by identifying this challenge, and making only sensitive and necessary alterations, it may be possible to preserve the Mission 66 design intent. The following recommendations for visitor center alterations and improvements attempt to reconcile the challenges of visitor center renovation with the changing needs of the NPS.

The most common problem addressed during a Mission 66 visitor center renovation is a lack of space for new programming and NPS needs. Many parks have outgrown their current Mission 66 visitor centers because of increased visitation and staff, additional functions, and growing collections. Meanwhile, increased participation by private partners and the need for revenue generation requires large space for retail and other commercial activities. To address this issue, areas of the visitor center need to be repurposed, or additions need to be made.

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<sup>120</sup> Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and The National Park Dilemma*, 339.

<sup>121</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 252.

An understanding of the original visitor experience and circulation flow is critical in this process. As discussed previously, Mission 66 visitor centers were designed to create a very specific sequence of experiences for the visitor. This is a major character-defining feature for these buildings. This sequence of events can be preserved while still offering additional services and functions within the visitor center, but the original intent must first be identified.

As more visitors explore a park and its history digitally before arriving at the visitor center, it may be possible to move a large amount of interpretation programming to a digital location, providing more space within the visitor center for other activities. Visitors can use their smart phones or computers within the visitor center to access information about a park before continuing on to the resource. At the Painted Desert Visitor Center at the Petrified Forest National Park, a 'digital tour' of the park is provided at a computer station, without taking up additional interpretation space within the visitor center itself. This type of digital interaction can be expanded to websites, QR codes, and other digital media within a visitor center.



6.1 Virtual Park Tour in the Painted Desert Visitor Center at Petrified Forest National Park. Digital interpretation methods can reduce the space needed for more traditional interpretation methods in Mission 66 visitor centers.

At many national parks, some level of interpretation is already provided on-site rather than in the visitor center. Again, this would reduce the space necessary for interpretation within the visitor center, allowing other functions to be provided. At Wupatki National Monument, the Mission 66 visitor center is located directly adjacent to the historic ruins. However, very little



6.2. View of the visitor center from the ruins at Wupatki National Monument. The visitor center is located directly adjacent to the park's resource. Views of the ruins from the visitor center encourage the visitor to explore the park. The Visitor center is built into a slope to appear lower in the landscape.

interpretation is provided within the visitor center. Instead, through exterior views, the visitor is encouraged to immediately interact with the resource. Park rangers dispense informational tour

booklets at the information desk. These booklets have numbers that correspond to markers surrounding the resource. At each marker, the booklet provides information about the site. Meanwhile, much of the interior of the visitor center has been repurposed as a gift shop, providing additional revenue for the park. The same strategy has been employed at Montezuma Castle National Monument. Again, this Mission 66 visitor center is located immediately adjacent to the resource. As soon as visitors enter the visitor center, they encounter the information desk and are presented with a view of the path leading them to the resource. Along this exterior path, informational signage provides information about the resource. (See illustration 2.8.) While much of the interpretation provided at these parks have been moved out



6.3 Markers along a trail instruct visitors to read specific information from a booklet provided in the visitor center.



of the visitor centers, the visitor flow and experience has been maintained. This on-site interpretation could increasingly be delivered electronically as well, through applications or websites that visitors could access at the appropriate locations from their smart phones.

At both of these parks, the visitor experience and flow has been maintained while still providing additional room for retail space. This requires an understanding of the original design intent. Inappropriately placed retail spaces which block the visitor's view of the next space in the sequence disrupts the cohesiveness of the experience and destroys a character-defining feature of the visitor center. At the Painted Desert Visitor Center, additional interpretation has been provided in a computer station. However, a retail area was installed which directly blocks the visitor's view of an exterior courtyard. This courtyard was designed by Neutra to encourage the visitor out into the park. The introduction of a retail area directly in front of the large windows surrounding the courtyard disrupts the originally intended visitor experience. When retail or other commercial areas are introduced into a Mission 66 visitor center, it is imperative that they are placed at locations that do not alter the original visitor flow.

While an intact visitor experience is crucial to the future preservation of Mission 66 visitor centers, intact original Mission 66 materials may be less important. Another issue common to all Mission 66 visitor centers is outdated utility systems and fixtures. Mission 66 plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling systems are expensive and not energy efficient. In addition, because of modern construction techniques used to build Mission 66 visitor centers, most of these systems are embedded in concrete slabs, or are installed as



6.4 Retail space at the Painted Desert Visitor Center block views to the exterior courtyard and alter the visitor's experience.

complete systems, making them difficult to access or replace.<sup>122</sup> The NPS has recently embraced a sustainability initiative, and replacing these outdated systems can result in better thermal performance and lower energy usage. However, when these systems are replaced, much of the original building fabric is altered. Unlike other historic materials, it is often impossible to alter only portions of modern construction materials or to replace them in-kind. As renovations become more common, the material integrity of the building must be weighted in relation to the overall preservation plan. For Mission 66 visitor centers, material integrity may not be as important in determining overall significance and preservation as integrity of design, circulation patterns, and the intended visitor experience.<sup>123</sup> Mission 66 visitor centers were designed to evoke a certain feeling and convey desired information about a park. This was the fundamental design intent. The preservation of a visitor's experience, and therefore the core of the building's purpose, is more important than integrity of materials.

Christine Madrid French, a Mission 66 scholar, writes that Mission 66 buildings "can still serve critical visitor needs, albeit with changes."<sup>124</sup> The GOA report has already gathered information showing renovation to be more cost effective than demolition and new construction. Sensitive renovations can preserve Mission 66 features while still meeting current park needs. While lack of funds, both public and private, coupled with the construction moratorium, is protecting Mission 66 visitor centers for now, it is important to address these issues so that when funding becomes available, appropriate alterations can be made. Revisiting the way the NPS renovates visitor centers will protect them in the future and lead to more suitable and relevant alterations.

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<sup>122</sup> Clement, Gage, Mitchell, and Thompson, "Mission 66 Architecture: Design in the Clouds, Preservation on the Ground."

<sup>123</sup> Clement, Gage, Mitchell, and Thompson, "Mission 66 Architecture: Design in the Clouds, Preservation on the Ground."

<sup>124</sup> Christine Madrid French, "Modern Architecture in the National Parks: Living Harmony" *PreservationNation Blog*, April 6, 2010. <http://blog.preservationnation.org/2010/04/16/modern-architecture-in-the-national-parks-living-in-harmony/#.UTZtXKU-4Vs>. Accessed March 10, 2013.

## CONCLUSION

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In the fifty years since Mission 66 ended, the NPS has continued to expand and evolve. In 2016, the NPS will celebrate its one hundred year anniversary. This approaching milestone makes it an appropriate time to look back on the past fifty years of NPS development, the importance of Mission 66 policies and how visitor centers can affect decisions made in the national parks today.

Evolving values in society at large and within the NPS are changing the way the public and the government perceives the national parks. Since Mission 66, public funding for the national parks has decreased, and a reliance on private funds has increased. Conrad Wirth envisioned a public national park system that was open to all Americans, without user fees or visitation caps. At that time, the majority of national park funds were from Congressional appropriations. Since the 1990s, visitation fees and commercial interests have become increasingly important in providing support to the national parks as public funds decreased. In 1953, Bernard DeVoto suggested closing national parks if the government could not provide adequate funds for their operations. Today, public-private partnerships and commercial involvement is encouraged to supplement insufficient or missing federal appropriations. This is not only a philosophical change, but has also altered the demand for space within Mission 66 visitor centers. While concessioners have been operating within the national parks since the founding of the NPS, these commercial interests continue to gain influence and authority within individual parks, not just as service providers, but as stakeholders as well. In this new form of park management and maintenance, commercial interests, rather than conservation, visitor experience, or education may determine the "public good". In addition, recreational fees have encouraged activities like camping, hiking, mountain biking, and others. While these activities provide additional public enjoyment and financial support for the parks, they may threaten the natural resources within a park and place additional demands on visitor centers as well.

Increased commercial activity within national parks has also altered visitor expectation of a national park experience. Many visitor centers are now expected to provide additional services that Mission 66 visitor centers were not designed to include. Large restaurants and retail areas are now provided by private interests within national parks. Additional services vary



widely due to park size and type. Larger parks with more visits per year, such as Gettysburg and Yellowstone, have much larger visitor centers that provide many additional services. Meanwhile, other Mission 66 visitor centers at smaller parks may continue to operate much as they had fifty years ago.

As technology continues to advance, visitor expectations for interpretation and educational experiences alter as well. There are two drastically different trends in interpretation within national parks today. On one side, education and interpretation is increasingly provided online or in the form of non-intrusive digital media. On the other end of the spectrum, new, “supercenter” visitor centers feature extensive museums, auditoriums, and recreational activities. These visitor centers run the risk of providing too much interpretation away from the resource, and may overshadow the resource completely, become the destination in the park rather than a compliment to the resource. In order to best protect Mission 66 visitor centers, a combination of these approaches should be explored. Centralized interpretation facilities are a hallmark of Mission 66 visitor center functions. However, as technology advances and more research is done, additional information can be placed online for access on tablets and smart phones. A combination of physical, centralized education, along with mobile information that can be taken into the national park, will allow flexibility in interpretation and preservation approaches.

To protect Mission 66 visitor centers in the future, the standards for determining their significance need to change as well. Rather than focusing on the modern architecture of the buildings, Mission 66 visitor centers should be placed in the larger context of the modernization of American society. Mission 66 visitor centers are significant in the same way that early shopping centers and corporate campuses are significant. They are a physical result of a shift in the way Americans lived, worked, and played. As personal car ownership rose and the Federal Highway system was built, Americans had a new mobility. At the same time, recreation became a distinct part of the American identity. This, coupled with the need for efficiency and modernization, gave rise to the Mission 66 visitor center. Placing Mission 66 visitor centers in this broader context gives them significance outside the NPS, and makes them more worthy of preservation in the future.

In addition, the concept of material integrity needs to evolve. For Mission 66 visitor centers, the presence of original building material may not be as important as the presence of the originally designed circulation flow and visitor experience. This challenge of integrity is one which all modern buildings are facing as they age, and one which the preservation community will need to address in the near future.

In 2006, to prepare for the one hundredth anniversary of the NPS, the Secretary of the Interior launched the Centennial Initiative. The goals outlined in the Centennial Initiative report, *The Future of America's National Parks*, are strikingly similar to Mission 66 policies. Like Mission 66, the Centennial Initiative is meant to usher the NPS into a new modern era. The Secretary of the Interior developed five overarching goals to guide the next generation of the NPS:

- Lead America in preserving and restoring treasured resources;
- Demonstrate environmental leadership to the nation;
- Offer superior recreational experiences where visitors explore and enjoy nature and the great outdoors, culture and history;
- Foster exceptional learning opportunities connecting people to parks, especially children and seniors; and
- Achieve management and partnership excellence to match the magnificence of the treasures entrusted to its care.<sup>125</sup>

While the intent to protect America's natural resources for public enjoyment remains the same, the evolution of the NPS has created different parameters for achieving this goal. Unlike Mission 66, this initiative is decentralized and is largely dependent on individual park planning. After the NPS, and other government agencies, restructured and downsized in 1995, individual parks have had greater autonomy and regional and national offices have had less centralized authority. The Centennial Initiative has attracted relatively little public attention, and with three years until the one-hundredth anniversary, the future of the parks remains unclear. Today, Mission 66 remains the last large-scale planning and development program for the NPS. It increased the range and scope of NPS activities, and well as annual funding.<sup>126</sup> The national parks, as Americans know them today, are largely a result of development and

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<sup>125</sup> *The Future of America's National Parks*, (Washington, DC, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2007): 1.

<sup>126</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 335.

planning during the Mission 66 era. With the Centennial Initiative, the NPS could once again redefine the role national parks play in America. Because of this, it is imperative that the importance of Mission 66 is re-evaluated. A rediscovery of policies and values that created Mission 66 visitor centers, and the tenets of Mission 66 as a whole, will do much to inform the next one hundred years of NPS growth. Many of the issues the NPS is facing today are the same issues that Conrad Wirth was attempting combat with the creation of Mission 66. Rather than condemning this program and its visitor centers, the NPS would do well to investigate the similarities between the past and the present. The initial Mission 66 research study conducted by the NPS was a necessary first step in understanding the evolution of NPS values. However, the continued misunderstanding of Mission 66 philosophies indicates that the circular nature of NPS issues of visitation, building maintenance, and funding may be less a result of current politics, and more related to internal practices and poorly defined standards. A re-appreciation of the tenets of Mission 66, and the values behind the design and construction of Mission 66 visitor centers will illuminate the original defining principles of the NPS, and guide decisions made in years to come.

## APPENDIX I - Visitor Center Inventory

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A survey of ninety-one Mission 66 visitor centers was conducted to determine how many have been demolished, how many have been significantly altered, and how many are extant with no major renovations.

This inventory includes only those visitor centers designed during the official Mission 66 program (1956-1966) and only new construction, not additions or significant renovations. While additions and renovations conducted during the Mission 66 program are important to the influence and impact of the program, they had existing constraints that effected design and siting decisions, and therefore were eliminated from this inventory. These parameters resulted in a list of ninety-one visitor centers.

The goal of this survey was to uncover how many Mission 66 visitor centers are still extant, and if conditions for preservation have worsened since the initial NPS studies. Information was obtained from individual park websites, General Management Plans, interpretation plans, Classified Structures reports, park planning websites, and newspaper articles. The current status of the visitor centers was divided into six different categories, symbolized by letters A – F. In addition to this information, the main interpretive goal of the park, scenery and conservation, recreation, or history, was recorded to delineate between different interpretation programming requirements. The private partner for the park was listed as well, as was any National Register information. The full survey and the results of are included in the following pages.

## RESULTS

Group A: Visitor center demolished or replaced

-Total: 16 (17.6%)

Group B: A significant renovation, resulting in the loss of all or most of the Mission 66 character-defining features

-Total: 5 (5.5%)

Group C: A renovation resulting in the loss of at least one, but less than the majority, of Mission 66 character-defining features. This group often included the upgrading or replacement of park interpretive exhibits.

-Total: 16 (17.6%)

Group D: Renovated, but Mission 66 character-defining features are preserved

-Total: 6 (9.9%)

Group E: Visitor Center in use with no known major renovations

-Total: 46 (50.5%)

Group F: Visitor Center repurposed or programming significantly changed

-Total: 2 (2.2%)

Name	Location	Date	Architect	Category	National Register Status	Type	Private Partners	Notes
Jamestown National Historic Site	VA	1956	EODC/Gilboy, Bellante & Clauss	a		Historic	Preservation Virginia	Replaced in 2007
Yorktown Visitor Center at Colonial National Historic Park	VA	1957	EODC/Gillboy, Bellante and Clauss	e		Historic	Preservation Virginia	
Flamingo Visitor Center at Everglades National Park	FL	1957	EODC/Harry L. Keck, Jr.	e, g		Scenic	Everglades Association	Sustained minor damage in 2005 Hurricane Katrina and Wilma. Park has explored renovation or demolition in the future when funding is available.
Fort Caroline National Memorial	Jacksonville, FL	1957	EODC	e		Historic/scenic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Colter Bay Visitor Center at Grand Teton National Park	Moose, WY	1957	WODC/Malone & Cooper	e,g		Scenic	Grand Teton National Park Foundation	Environment Assessment is out to explore demolition and relocation.
New Canyon Village Visitor Center at Yellowstone National Park	WY	1957	Hurt & Trudell	a		Scenic	Yellowstone Association	Demolished in 2006
Pipestone National Monument Visitor Center	MI	1957	EODC	e,g		Historic	Pipestone Indian Shire Association	The park Interpretive Plan calls for demolition and replacement away from quarry boundary in 2014-2015. Status of project is unconfirmed.
Kris Eggle Visitor Center at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument	Ajo, AZ	1957	WODC/Lescher and Mahoney	e		Historic	Western National Parks Association	
Fort Frederica National Memorial	St. Simons Island, GA	1957	EODC	e		Historic	Fort Frederica Association	
Moose Visitor Center at Grand Teton National Park	WY	1958	WODC/Spencer, Ambrose & Lee	a		Scenic	Grand Teton National Park Foundation	Demolished and replaced with new visitor center in 2007
Royal Palms Visitor Center, Everglades National Park	FL	1958	EODC	e		Scenic	Everglades Association	
Ben Reifel Visitor Center at Badlands National Park	Rapid City, SD	1958	Cecil Doty and Lucas, Craig, Whitwam	c		Historic/Scenic	Badlands Natural History Association	Renovation included a new 95 seat theater and new exhibits.
Peaks of Otter Visitor Center at Blue Ridge Parkway	Roanoke, VA	1958	Robert L. Brown, Architect	e		Scenic	Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation	
Craters of the Moon National Monument	Arco, ID	1958	WODC/Hurt, Trudell & Capell	c	National Register eligible	Historic	Craters of the Moon Natural History Association	Renovations included 2 major additions
Theodore Roosevelt National Park	Medora, ND	1958	WODC/Germano Milono	e		Historic/Scenic	Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association	
Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument	Jensen, UT	1958	Anshen and Allen	a	National Historic Landmark	Historic	Intermountain Natural History Association	Demolished in 2009 due to structural issues and site controversy. Replaced with new visitor center in different location, but new exhibition hall was built at Mission 66 visitor center location.
Sugarlands Visitor Center at Great Smoky Mountains National Park	TN	1958	EODC	d		Historic/Scenic	Great Smokey Mountains Association	
Moores Creek National Battlefield	Currie, NC	1958	EODC	e		Historic	Moorse Creek Battleground Association	Oldest non-profit support group for National Parks.
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site	Elverson, PA	1958	EODC	e		Historic	Friends of Hopewell Furnace	
Fort Union National Monument	Atreus, NM	1958	WODC/Cecil Doty/Bennett	e		Historic	Western National Parks Association	
Montezuma Castle National Monument	Camp Verde, AZ	1959	WODC	e		Historic	Western National Parks Association	
George Washington Carver National Monument	Diamond, MI	1959	EODC	c		Historic	Carver Birth Place Association	Renovations include a new theater, improved exhibit area, interactive exhibit space, interactive classrooms, museum storage, sales, library, space for future offices, multi-purpose room/tornado shelter.
Mound City Group Visitor Center at Hopewell Culture National Historic Park	Chillicothe, OH	1959	William Cramp Scheetz, Jr	c		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	Pitched roof replaced flat roof because of leaking issues in 1991. Sustainably altered Mission 66 character defining feature.
Furnace Creek Visitor Center at Death Valley National Park	CA	1959	WODC/Welton Becket & Associates	d		Scenic	Death Valley Natural History Association	Renovations included new exhibits, energy efficient windows and new HVAC system. Did not alter character defining features.
Bryce Canyon National Park	UT	1959	WODC/Cannon and Mullen	b		Scenic	Bryce Canyon Natural History Association	Additions and alterations sustainably altered Mission 66 characteristics. Created a larger, two story building from the mission 66 building.
Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Site	Hodgenville, KY	1959	Eastern Office of Design & Construction (EODC)	e		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	Separate, privately run museum located outside of the park.
Coronado National Memorial	Hereford, AZ	1959	WODC	e		Historic/Scenic	Western National Parks Association	
Mammoth Cave National Park	KY	1959	Bellante & Clauss	b		Historic/Scenic	Friends of Mammoth Cave National Park	Stripped to shell and rebuilt with addition. Loss of Mission 66 character defining features.
Wright Brothers National Memorial	Kill Devil Hills, NC	1959	Mitchell/Giurgola	c	Listed on the National Register	Historic	First Flight Foundation	Renovation included a new addition.
Cumberland Gap National Historic Park	Middlesboro, KY	1959	EODC	e		Historic/Scenic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Fraser Hill Visitor Center at Saratoga National Historical Park	Stillwater, NY	1960	EODC/Benson	d		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	Renovations included new exhibits and classrooms.
Oak Creek Visitor Center at Zion National Park	Springdale, UT	1960	WODC/Cecil Doty/Cannon and Mullen	f		Historic/Scenic	Zion National Park Foundation	Repurposed as only a museum. New visitor center is located in a different location.
Arches National Park	Moab, UT	1960	Western Office of Design & Construction (WODC)/Cecil Doty	b		Scenic	Canyonlands Natural History Association	The Mission 66 visitor center was seriously renovated, all character defining features were lost. Mission 66 building was 'incorporated into the new'.
Eielson Visitor Center at Denali National Park and Preserve	AK	1961 (?)	WODC	a		Scenic		Replaced in 2008.
Great Sand Dunes National Monument	Mosca, CO	1961	WODC	a		Scenic		Replaced in 2004.
Cyclorama at Gettysburg NMP	Gettysburg, PA	1961	Neutra and Alexander	a	National Register eligible	Historic	Gettysburg Foundation	Demolition in progress as of January 2013.
Effigy Mounds National Monument	Harpers Ferry, IA	1961 (?)	EODC	b		Historic/Scenic	Eastern National Parks Association	Pitched replaced flat roof in 1992 because of water issues. Significant interior remodel also took place.
Fort Donelson National Battlefield	Dover, TN	1962	EODC	e, g		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association and Friends of the Campaign for Fort Henry and Donelson	Park officials feel that facilities are inadequate and would like to remodel or replace.
Temple Bar Visitor Center at Lake Mead National Recreation Area	NV	1962	WODC	d	National Register eligible	Recreation	Western National Parks Association	Renovated in 2013. Renovations include ADA accessibility improvements, new windows, HVAC and auditorium improvements. Qualified for LEED Silver rating.
Hoh River Visitor Center at Olympic National Park	WA	1962	WODC/ Cecil Doty	c		Scenic/recreation	Discover Your Northwest	In use with minor renovations. Expanded bathrooms and enclosed vestibule at entrance. Expanded bathrooms destroyed fern garden. Currently undergoing an upgrading of systems and exhibit space.
Fort Vancouver National Historical Site	Vancouver, WA	1962	WODC	e		Historic	Fort Vancouver National Trust and the McLoughlin Memorial Association	
Great Basin National Park	Baker, NV	1962	WODC	f		Scenic	Great Basin National Park Foundation	Replaced by new primary park visitor center. Still used as Lehman Cave's visitor center, interpreting a single area of the park.
Homestead National Monument of America	Beatrice, NB	1962	WODC/Leo A. Daly & Associates	a		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	Replaced in 2007.
Parachute Key Visitor Center at Everglades National Park	FL	1962	EODC	a		Scenic	Everglades Association	Demolished in 1992 after Hurricane Andrew.
Painted Desert Community, Petrified Forest National Park	AZ	1962	Neutra and Alexander	d	Listed on the National Register	Historic/Scenic	Petrified Forest Museum Association	In use with minor renovations, including the enclosure of an upper terrace. Part of the Painted Desert Community Historic District.
Antietam National Battlefield	Sharpsville, MD	1962	EODC/William Cramp Scheetz, Jr.	c		Historic	Western Maryland Interpretive Association	In use with addition
Timpanogos Cave National Monument	American Fork, UT	1963	WODC/Cecil Doty/Cannon and Mullen	a		Scenic	Western National Parks Association	Destroyed by fire 1991
Russell Cave National Monument	Bridgeport, AL	1963	EODC/Northington Smith & Kranert	e		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Capulin Volcano National Monument	NM	1963	NPS Southwest Regional Office/Cecil Doty	e		Scenic	Western National Parks Association	
Fort McHenry National Monument and Shrine	Baltimore, MD	1963	EODC/Biond, Benson & Koury	a		Historic	Friends of Fort McHenry	Replaced, construction of new center in progress.
Fort Pulaski National Monument	Savannah, GA	1963	Levy & Kiley/McGinty & Stanely Associates	e		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Tonto National Monument	Roosevelt, AZ	1963	WODC/Cecil Doty	e		Historic	Western National Parks Association	
Whitman Mission National Historic Site	Walla Wall, WA	1963	WODC	e		Historic		
Chancellorsville Visitor Center at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields NMP	VA	1963	EODC	e		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Pea Ridge National Military Park	AK	1963	EODC	e		Historic	Pea Ridge National Military Park Foundation	
Mount Rushmore National Memorial	Keystone, SD	1963	WODC/Cecil Doty/Harold Spitznagel & Associates	a		Historic	Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society	Demolished in 1994.
Headquarters and Visitor Center at Natchez Trace Parkway	Tupelo, MS	1963	EODC	e,g		Historic	Natchez Trace Parkway Association and Eastern National Parks Association	The Mission 66 visitor center is in use, but a new museum and cultural center might be built. It is unclear what would happen to the Mission 66 visitor center should this happen. Project is still in the planning stages.
Horseshoe Bend NMP	Daviston, AL	1963	EODC/Biggers & Neal	e		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Logan Pass Visitor Center at Glacier National Park	MT	1963	WODC/Brinkman & Lenon	e	Listed on the National Register	Scenic	Glacier Association	
Colorado National Monument	Fruita, Colorado	1963	WODC/Cecil Doty	e	Listed on the National Register	Scenic	Colorado National Monument Association	
Stones River National Battlefield	Murfreesboro, TN	1963	EODC/Benson	b		Historic	Friends of Stony River National Battlefield	Remodeled and expanded in 2004. 4,000 sq ft addition was added and interiors were completely remodeled with new exhibits.
Fort Clatsop National Memorial	Astoria, OR	1963	WODC/Jacobberger, Franks & Norman	e		Historic	Lewis & Clark National Park Association	

Ohanapecosh Visitor Center at Mount Rainier National Park	WA	1964	WODC/John M. Morse & Associates	e		Scenic	Discover Your Northwest	
Lodgepole Visitor Center at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks	CA	1964	Anshen and Allen	e		Scenic	Sequoia Parks Foundation, and Sequoia Natural History Association	
Sitka National Historical Park	AK	1964	WODC/Cecil Doty/John Morse & Associates	d	National Register eligible	Scenic	Alaska Geographic	In use with sympathetic addition.
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park	GA	1964	Francis P Smith & Henry H Smith	c		Historic	Friends of Kennesaw Mountain	In use with addition.
Alpine Visitor Center, Rocky Mountain National Park	CO	1964	Taliesin Associated Architects	c		Scenic	Rocky Mountain Nature Association	Complete interior renovation.
Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center at Olympic National Park	WA	1964	WODC	c		Scenic/recreation	Friends of Olympic National Park	Complete interior renovation.
Betatakin Visitor Center, Navajo National Monument	Tonalea, AZ	1964	WODC	c		Historic	Western National Parks Association	In use with addition.
Wupatki National Monument	Flagstaff, AZ	1964	WODC/Cecil Doty/Lescher and Mahoney	e		Historic/Scenic	Western National Parks Association	
Beaver Meadows Headquarters at Rocky Mountain National Park	Estes Park,CO	1964	Taliesin Associated Architects	e	National Historic Landmark	Scenic	Rocky Mountain Nature Association	
Canyon de Chelly National Monument	Chinle, AZ	1964	WODC/Cecil Doty	e		Historic/Scenic	Western National Parks Association	
Natural Bridges National Monument	Lake Powell, UT	1965	WODC/Cecil Doty/Cannon and Mullen	e		Scenic	Friends of Arches and the Canyonlands Parks and Canyonlands Natural History Association	
Salt Pond Visitor Center at Cape Cod National Seashore	Wellfleet, MA	1965	EODC/Biderman	c	National Register eligible	Scenic	Friends of Cape Code National Seashore and Eastern National Parks Association	In use, renovated in 2005.
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument	Silver City, NM	1965	WODC/Delong & Zahm Associates	e		Historic	Western National Parks Association	
Grant Grove Visitor Center at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks	CA	1965	WODC/Walter Wagner & Partners	e		Scenic	Sequoia Parks Foundation, and Sequoia Natural History Association	
Grant Village Visitor Center at Yellowstone National Park	WY	1965	WODC/Adrian Malone & Associates	c		Scenic	Yellowstone Association	
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument	Flagstaff, AZ	1965	WODC/ Cecil Doty	e		Scenic	Western National Parks Association	
Fort Raleigh National Historic Site	Manteo, NC	1965	EODC	e		Historic	First Colony Foundation	
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial	St. Louis, MI	1965	Eero Saarinen & Associates	e		Historic	Jefferson National Parks Association	
Fort Necessity National Battlefield	Farmington, PA	1966		a		Historic	Friends of Fort Necessity and Eastern National Parks Association.	Replaced in 2005.
Petersburg National Battlefield	VA	1966	EODC/Philadelphia Planning & Service Center	e		Historic	Eastern National Parks Association	
Booker T Washington National Monument	Hardy, VA	1966	EODC/Smithey & Boynton	e	National Register eligible	Historic	Friends of Booker T. Washington National Monument and Eastern National Parks Association	
Assateague Island National Seashore	Berlin, MD	1966	NPS Philadelphia Planning & Service Center	a		Scenic	Assateague Island Alliance and Eastern National Parks Association	Replaced in 2010.
Harry F. Byrd Visitor Center at Shenandoah National Park	Big Meadows, VA	1966	EODC	c		Scenic	Shenandoah National Park Association, Shenandoah National Park Trust	Renovated in 2006. Entrance remodeled and exhibits updated.
Yosemite National Park	CA	1966	WODC/Spencer, Lee & Busse	c		Scenic	Yosemite Conservancy	Park museum located next door. Renovations included updated exhibits
Henry M. Jackson Memorial (Paradise) Visitor Center at Mount Rainier National Park	WA	1966	Whimberly, Whisenand, Allison & Tong/McGuire & Muri	a		Scenic	Discover Your Northwest	Demolished and replaced in 2008.
Great Falls Visitor Center at George Washington Memorial Parkway	VA	1966	Kent Cooper and Associates	e		Scenic/recreation	Eastern National Parks Association	
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area	Page, AZ	1966	WODC/Cecil Doty/Bureau of Reclamation Colorado River Storage Project	e		Recreation	Glen Canyon Natural History Association	
Kalapa Visitor Center at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	HI	1966	WODC	a		Scenic	Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association, Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park	Destroyed by volcanic activity in 1989
Cabrillo National Monument	San Diego, CA	1966	Frank L. Hope & Associates/WODC/Cecil Doty	c		Scenic	Cabrillo National Monument Foundation	

## APPENDIX II - List Of Illustrations

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1.1 *Your Mission 66 and the National Parks, A Passport to Adventure*. n.d. Mission 66 Program History. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, Box A8213.

2.1 The Longmire Community Building at Mount Rainier National Park. Historic American Buildings Survey, United States Library of Congress, Reproduction number HABS WASH, 27-LONG, 4—1, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/wa0660.photos.190157p/>.

2.2 The Old Faithful Inn (1903) at Yellowstone National Park. Historic American Buildings Survey, United States Library of Congress, Reproduction number HABS WYO, 20-YELNAP, 1—17, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.wy0093.photos.174597p/>.

2.3 The Bandelier CCC Historic District. Photograph courtesy of Pamela Jerome, April 22, 2013.

2.4 Jackson Lake Lodge at Grand Teton National Park. Paula S. Reed and Edith B. Wallace, "Jackson Lake Lodge" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001.

2.5 Sunset Crater National Monument visitor center. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

2.6 The Painted Desert Visitor Center at Petrified Forest National Park. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

2.7 The visitor center at Wupatki National Monument. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

2.8 Visitor flow and experience at Montezuma Castle National Monument. Photographs by author, April 13, 2013.

3.1 The Cyclorama Center at Gettysburg National Military Park. Historic American Buildings Survey, United States Library of Congress, Reproduction number HABS PA-6709-106 (CT), <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/pa3988.color.215116c/resource/>.

4.1. The Henry M. Jackson (Paradise) Visitor Center at Mount Rainier National Park. Photograph courtesy of Andrew Dolkart.

5.1. The South Rim Visitor Center at Grand Canyon National Park. Photograph by author, April 14, 2013.



6.1 Virtual Tour Center at the Painted Desert Visitor Center. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

6.2 Visitor Center at Wupatki National Monument. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

6.3 Interpretation method at Wupatki National Monument. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

6.4 Retail space in the Painted Desert Visitor Center at Petrified Forest National Park. Photograph by author, April 13, 2013.

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